

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ  
لَآيَاتٍ لِلْعَالَمِينَ

And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours: verily in that are signs for those who know.

Qur'an: 30, 22

## ABSTRACT

The Arabic linguistic tradition is one of the most magnificent traditions in the history of linguistics, but some aspects of it are still largely unexplored. This study aims to provide a better understanding of the analysis of the syntax and semantics of sentences in the Arabic linguistic tradition. It covers sentence cohesion and the process that links the different elements of the sentence. It focuses on the ellipsis of certain elements of the sentence and on when Arab linguists consider the sentence to be elliptical.

The study consists of seven chapters. Chapter One provides some introductory remarks and gives an account of previous studies relating to the subject. Chapter Two gives a brief historical account of traditional Arabic linguistic studies. It deals briefly with the most important linguistic schools. It also includes an explanation of some of the most important principles on which Arabic linguistic thought is based. Chapter Three is devoted to the concept of the sentence and the syntactic and semantic connections between the two indispensable elements on which the simple Arabic sentence is based. Chapter Four gives a detailed explanation of the theory of government ( *'amal* ) which has dominated Arabic sentential studies from their inception up to the present. It registers the views of the leaders of the Baṣran and Kûfan schools and discusses their disputes about the determination of governing and governed elements. Chapter Five is devoted to the study of ellipsis in Arabic grammatical thought. This chapter discusses most of the types of Arabic sentence which Arab grammarians regard as elliptical, and the different ways in which they assume the ellipted elements. Chapter Six deals with ellipsis in traditional Arabic rhetorical studies. The chapter draws upon the valuable material left to us by 'Abdul Qâhir al-Jurjânî (d. 1078). It covers the rhetorical purposes of ellipsis and offers a brief comparison between the rhetorical treatment of ellipsis in Arabic and Halliday and Hasan's treatment of ellipsis in English. Chapter Seven summarises the major findings of this study, and makes some additional observations and recommendations for further studies related to the subject.

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the author of this thesis, declare that none of the material in this thesis has been previously submitted by me or any other candidate for a degree in this or any other university.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my wife Noura al-Harbi and my daughter Amjâd whose love and moral support have sustained me constantly during my work.

## **COPYRIGHT**

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without his prior written consent, and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

...	ellipted element
acc.	accusative case
com.	comment
def.	definitive
du.	dual
f.	faḍlah (extra element)
fem.	feminine
gen.	genitive case
ind.	indicative mood
jus.	jussive mood
m.	masculine
n.	noun
neg.	negative
nom.	nominative case
obj.	object
pl.	plural
S	sentence
sub.	subjunctive mood
top.	topic
X → Y	X governs Y



## **CHAPTER ONE**

# **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 The main aims and objectives of the research**

The main aim of this research is to provide a better understanding of sentence analysis in the Arabic linguistic tradition and to discuss its syntactic and semantic aspects, with particular reference to ellipsis.

The study aims, in the first place, to examine the concept of the sentence in Arabic linguistics, its components and the cohesion between them on the basis of the arguments put forward by traditional Arab linguists. It will examine the explicit views of these linguists, and will deduce the judgements they implicitly make in referring to the Arabic sentence and its constituent elements.

The study will focus on the ellipsis of certain elements of the sentence. It will try to determine when it is possible to omit an element from a sentence, when Arab linguists consider an element of a sentence to have been ellipted, and on what basis they pass such a judgement. In doing this, the study draws upon the huge volume of linguistic material passed down to us by pioneers in Arabic linguistics. The more one reads this rich material, the more one comes across

areas that deserve study. Such study will enrich our understanding of the Arabic language and assist our attempts to analyse it.<sup>1</sup>

The study deals with Arabic linguistic theory in general. However, particular reference will be made to the following books:

- (1) Sibawayh (180/796), *al-Kitâb*
- (2) Ibn al-Sarrâj (316/928), *al-'Uṣûl fî al-Nahw*
- (3) Ibn Jinnî (392/1001), *al-Khaṣâ'is*
- (4) Al-Jurjânî (471/1078), *Dalâ'il al-I'jâz*
- (5) Ibn Maḍâ' al-Qurṭubî (592/1195), *al-Radd 'alâ al-Nuḥah*
- (6) Ibn Hishâm (761/1359), *Mughnî al-Labîb*

These books were chosen because of their important status in the vast literature of the Arabic tradition. In the following paragraphs, I set out some ideas concerning these books which illustrate their importance.

Sibawayh's book, which was written in the second/ninth century, is the oldest in the history of Arabic linguistics. No study dealing with Arabic linguistics can afford to ignore this indispensable book. Sibawayh's aim in writing this book was to explain the structure of the Arabic language, and to a

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<sup>1</sup> Arab linguists did not ascribe much importance to the various local dialects. Their main aim was to examine the language of the Qur'ân. It should be pointed out that the classical Arabic language does not differ greatly, in terms of either syntax or morphology, from its grandchild, modern standard Arabic. The differences between them are in the lexical aspects (cf. Chejne 1969; Stetkevych 1970).

large extent he succeeded. As a result, Arab linguists have depended on this book up to the present day (cf. 2.4).

Ibn al-Sarrâj was one of the pioneers of Arabic linguistics in the third/tenth century. His book *al-Uṣūl* offers a brief account of all previous linguistic scholarship, as well as the principles of Arabic linguistics making use of all the linguistic trends, including those of the Baṣran and Kûfan schools.

Ibn Jinnî's book *al-Khaṣā'is* is one of the most famous books of the fourth/eleventh century. It puts forward the views of those who came before the author and deals with them critically. It is a comprehensive book which discusses grammar, morphology, and phonetics (cf. 2.6).

*Dalā'il al-I'jâz*, by al-Jurjânî, owes its importance to the fact that it took linguistic studies in a totally different direction from the one prevailing at the time. Arabic linguistic studies, since the appearance of Sibawayh's book, had followed an educational and grammatical line, with no, or very little, reference to meaning to meet the demands for reinforcing grammar. In the fifth/twelfth century al-Jurjânî wrote *Dalā'il al-I'jâz* with the aim of focussing primarily on meaning in order to prove the superiority of the Qur'ānic text. For this reason his sentence analysis deserves attention (cf. 2.10.4).

*Al-Radd 'alâ al-Nuḥâh*, by Ibn Maḍâ, was written in the sixth/thirteenth century and is a strong criticism of the grammarians' methodology especially that of the Baṣran school. The book calls for the abolition of the theory of government that had dominated grammatical studies, as well as discussing a number of minor issues that concern grammarians. Ibn Maḍâ' argues that all this is no more than

excessive philosophising which diverts linguistic studies away from their main aim, which is the preservation of the Qur'ânic text (cf. 2.7).

Ibn Hishâm's book *Mughnî al-labîb* was one of the most distinguished Arabic books written in the eighth/fifteenth century. Ibn Hishâm's aim in writing this book was not only to preserve Arabic language, but also to preserve the Islamic religion. However, *Mughnî al-labîb* does not deal with grammar only, but also with other matters that fall within the domain of rhetoric (cf. 2.9).

Thus, in this study I refer to a number of famous Arabic linguistic books. I do not intend comprehensively to associate this study with any one work of a specific Arab linguist. The overall aim of the study is to observe how traditional Arabic linguistics in general has dealt with sentence analysis and especially to discuss the assumption that there are element(s) omitted from some Arabic sentences, making use of the views of a selection of distinguished Arab linguists.

As a prerequisite for the achievement of its main aim, the study deals with a number of preliminary issues. These will include an examination of the historical development of Arabic linguistic theory and the factors that led to its emergence. This is intended not as a historical account *per se*, but rather as a means of acquainting ourselves with the influences that have shaped the development of these studies, which, in turn, have helped to mould Arabic linguistics in later periods.

The study also aims to explicate the sentential theory which dominated Arabic linguistic thought for a long time, that is, the theory of government (*'amal*). This will be achieved via an analysis of some of the examples given by Arab linguists themselves to explain verb transitivity and grammatical

connections. In this respect, the study shows that the development of an interest in sentence analysis began merely as a means of explaining the different parsing signs (*ḥarakât al-i'râb*), and the elements that separate different constituents in the sentence structure. By al-Jurjânî's time Arab linguists were beginning to address semantic issues. Ellipsis is given a special focus in Al-Jurjânî's theory of sentence analysis. His role in emphasising the semantic aspects of ellipsis is especially important. His classification of transitive verbs provided a system for analysing the content which paid more attention to the semantic features that lay behind the surface representation of the form.

It should be stressed that the objective of this study is not confined to highlighting those aspects of Arabic linguistic thought that are associated with sentence analysis and ellipsis. The study goes beyond this to include other elements of traditional Arabic linguistics that are indirectly connected with this subject. This will become clear when I discuss some of the primary principles underlying Arabic linguistic studies from the outset up until their development into a state of maturity (cf. 2.11).

## **1.2 The value of the study and its contribution to the field**

The value of this study lies in the fact that it addresses numerous issues in Arabic linguistics with its two main branches, grammar and rhetoric, particularly since the study of the sentence and of ellipsis has attracted the attention of scholars from both sides of the linguistic divide. Such duality has helped considerably in the formation of a wider view of Arabic linguistic thought.

The study establishes a link between traditional Arabic grammar (*nahw*) and Arabic rhetoric (*balâghah*), because both branches should serve one goal, namely the study of sentence structure and its syntactic and semantic elements. Unfortunately, such a link is seldom made in Arabic linguistics, in which these two branches are usually completely detached from one another.

The paucity of research on this subject is another factor that contributes to the value of this study. To the best of the writer's knowledge Arab linguists have not written specifically on this subject, and all the available material is scattered across a number of books dealing with rhetoric and grammar. Moreover, contemporary treatment of this subject differs immensely, both in content and in method, from that represented in the present thesis (cf. 1.5).

As a phenomenon common to all human languages, ellipsis has been the subject of many modern linguistic studies.<sup>1</sup> Hence a study of this phenomenon in traditional Arabic linguistics may have great importance not only for specialists in Arabic linguistics but also for students of linguistics in general. Linguists as a whole may benefit from knowing how traditional Arab linguists treated ellipsis in the Arabic language.

The study discusses many aspects of the analysis given by traditional Arab linguists, including the Baṣrans and Kūfans, of styles involving elliptical sentences in Arabic. This will be illustrated by analysing sentences such as:

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sag (1977); Lobeck (1995).

*al-nâr-a al-nâr-a*

the fire-acc. the fire-acc.

*al-ṣabr-a al-ṣabr-a*

the patience-acc. the patience-acc.

In each example both words are in the accusative, and so Arab linguists argued that verbs have been ellipted from such sentences. They call the style used in the first example *uṣlûb al-tahdhîr* (cautioning), and argue that the assumed structure is *iḥdhar al-nâr-a iḥdhar al-nâr-a* (Beware of the fire), while the style used in the second example is called *uṣlûb al-ighrâ* (instigation) and the assumed structure is *ilzam al-ṣabr-a ilzam al-ṣabr-a* (Be patient). Explanation of the Arabic method of analysing such styles represents a valuable addition to the field of Arabic linguistics (cf. 5.3).

Finally, the study covers a number of medieval Arab linguists' works and offers the contemporary reader in a simple manner an explanation of the most important Arabic method of sentence analysis. Such works are difficult to comprehend because they contain special expressions used only in traditional Arabic linguistic books and adopt excessive abbreviation because they assume that the reader is a specialist in the field. A glance at the Arabic appendix at the end of this thesis will make this point clear.

### 1.3 The use of the term “sentence” in this study

In modern linguistics, the term “sentence” is defined as the largest structural unit in the grammar of a language (cf. 3.1). This to a large extent accords with the

definition of the sentence in traditional Arabic linguistics. Nevertheless, some differences become clear when we deal with sentences such as the following:

*Zayd-un yaḍrib-u ‘Amr-an*

Zayd hits ‘Amr

In Arabic linguistics, a phrase such as *yaḍrib-u ‘Amr-an* in this example is regarded as an independent *jumlaḥ* (sentence), and as a whole it functions as a predicate for the subject *Zayd-un*. However, in modern linguistics it cannot be called a sentence, but instead is called a clause. Therefore, the term sentence may be used to describe what is called in Arabic linguistics *jumlaḥ kubrâ* (major sentence), whereas the term “clause” is used to describe what is called *jumlaḥ ṣuḡhrâ* (minor sentence) (cf. Chapter Three).

In this study, the term “sentence” is used as an equivalent of the Arabic linguistic term *jumlaḥ*, irrespective of any differences in the definitions of these two terms as a result of their usage in different cultures.

#### 1.4 The use of the terms “ellipsis, ellipted, elliptical”

The terms “ellipsis, ellipted and elliptical” will be used in this study to denote the omission from the Arabic sentence of a constituent element, which Arab linguists call both *ḥadhḥ* and *idmâr*. In addition, these terms will be used to indicate the elements assumed to have been deleted by Arab linguists. This somewhat restricts the definition of the term, irrespective of its various other connotations in modern linguistic studies.



## 1.5 Previous studies

Passing reference to sentence analysis and to ellipsis has been made in traditional books on Arabic linguistics. However, to the best of the writer's knowledge there is no book which deals principally with ellipsis in traditional Arabic linguistics apart from *al-Hadhf-u wa al-Taqdîr fî al-Qur'ân al-Karîm* (Ellipsis and Assumption in the Holy Qur'ân) by Muḥammad Ibn al-Hâjj (1200/1785). This book is a long poem consisting of some one hundred and fifty-seven lines, in which the author deals with all the components of the Arabic sentence and ellipsis (*hadhf*) in Arabic syntax and with morphology in broad terms.

However, a number of contemporary studies exist which deal with Arabic sentence analysis and which concentrate at the same time on elliptical sentences. The most important of these are discussed below.

1. Al-Hroot, Ali Khalaf (1987), "Some Aspects of Deletion in Arabic".

Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

This is the most recent study of the subject. It offers a detailed analysis of several aspects of deletion in Modern Standard Arabic using the principles of transformational grammar developed by the American linguist Chomsky and his followers.

Al-Hroot's study does not accord high priority to sentence analysis in classical Arabic linguistic thought from the point of view either of grammar or of rhetoric. It does, however, treat as its main concern the application of

Chomsky's theory to the Arabic language and the deletion of elements in the sentence.

Obviously, the aims of Al-Hroot's study are quite different from that of the present study, which seeks to study sentence analysis and ellipsis in Arabic linguistic thought. Al-Hroot touches only briefly on ellipsis in traditional Arabic linguistics in the first chapter, which contains a brief description of sentence structure in classical Arabic linguistics and a short description of the theory of government (*'amal*). All this however, is intended merely as an introduction to the study.

2. Abû Shâdî, Mustafâ (1992), *al-Hadhf al-Balâghî fî al-Qur'ân al-Karîm* (Rhetorical Ellipsis in the Holy Qur'ân). Cairo: Maktabat al-Qur'ân.

This tries to determine the places in the Qur'ân in which ellipsis is used and tries to combine this with an explanation of the rhetorical purposes of ellipsis. The author has succeeded in locating more than one thousand places in the Qur'ân where ellipsis is used and he gives the reasons for this from a rhetorical perspective. He bases his judgment mainly on the views of the traditional writers of Arabic rhetoric particularly those of al-Suyûtî which are embodied in his book *al-itqân* and al-Zarkashi's book *al-burhân*. Abû Shâdî's study does not give priority to the analysis of the sentence or to its grammar. Instead it concentrates, as is evident from its title, on the rhetorical aspects of the ellipsis.

3. Al-Hammûz, Aḥmad 'Abd al-Fattâḥ (1984), *al-Hadhf fî al-Mathal al-*

'*arabî* (Ellipsis in Arabic Proverbs). Jordan: Dâr 'Ammâr.

This study deals with ellipsis in Arabic proverbs. It draws heavily on al-Maydânî's book *mu'jam al-amthâl*, mainly because this is the most famous and detailed book on the subject of Arabic proverbs. The basic premise of the study is that Arabic proverbs should be treated as one of the strong bases of Arabic grammar. Thus, Al-Hammûz's study tries to fill a gap in the field. It represents Arabic proverbs as a valuable source of linguistic material and, first and foremost, as an untapped source for the study of Arabic linguistic elements including ellipsis.

4. Hammûdah, Tâhir Sulaymân (1983), *Zâhirat al-Hadhfi al-Dars al-Lughawî* (The Phenomenon of Ellipsis in [Arabic] Linguistics). Alexandria, Egypt: al-Dâr al-Jâmi'iyah.

This study deals with ellipsis in the broadest sense of the Arabic term *hadhf*, which includes ellipsis of elements or an element from the sentence, and ellipsis of one or more letters from the word (e. g. the ellipsis of one of the defective letters, which include, the *wâw*, the *alif*, the *yâ*, the *hamza*, and the *tâ* at the end of words). In other words, the study investigates ellipsis at the level not only of syntax but also of morphology. It also compares the views of Arab linguists on ellipsis with those of Chomsky and his followers.

5. Ismâ'îl, Abd al-Rahmân Muḥammad (n. d.), *al-Hadhfi al-Lughah wa*

*Mazâhiruh-u fî al-Qur'ân* (Ellipsis in the [Arabic] Language and its Forms in the Qur'ân). Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, al-Azhar University, Egypt.

This study is concerned with the Arabic linguistic term *ḥadhf* in its broad sense, including the ellipsis of words, letters and parsing signs (*'alâmât al-i'râb*). Its main focus is on ellipsis in both grammar and morphology in the Qur'ân, but it goes on to study the style of writing used in the Qur'ân, what may be ellipted in that style, and the relationship of all these elements to the various readings of the Qur'ân as well as the development of writing among the Arabs.

6. Owens, Jonathan (1988), *The Foundations of Grammar: An Introduction to Medieval Arabic Grammatical Theory*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

This study is regarded as one of the best studies that offer the Western reader a comprehensive discussion of sentence analysis in the Arabic linguistic tradition. It does not, however, deal only with the study of sentence analysis but also includes elements of morphology.

Owens's book attempts to introduce Arabic grammar to the Western reader, making use of the fact that there are certain theories in Arabic grammar which are similar to contemporary linguistic theories prevailing in the West. Such an approach can make the understanding of Arabic linguistic theory by Western readers much easier and can assist with a comparison between the two methods. On the basis of this understanding, Owens has devoted a whole

chapter to ellipsis in Arabic grammar. He gives a brief but solid account of Arab grammarians' analysis of the ellipted elements, without, however, paying any attention to the rhetorical aspects of ellipsis.

7. Ibrâhîm, 'Abd al-Fattâh (1975), *al-Hadhf wa al-Idmâr fî Uslûb al-Qur'ân al-Karîm wa al-Asâlîb al-'Arabiyyah* (Ellipsis and Suppression in the Style of the Holy Qur'ân and other Arabic Styles). Cairo: al-Muhammadiyah.

This study is similar to that of Hammûdah. Both studies deal with ellipsis (*hadhf*) in the broad sense of the term as it is used in Arabic linguistic studies, which includes ellipsis of a letter, a word or a whole sentence. However, even though the study concentrates mainly on traditional grammar, it touches on some rhetorical issues in the interpretation of the Qur'ân (*tafsîr*).

8. Hamdân, Ibtisâm (1992), *al-Hadhf wa al-Taqdîm wa al-Ta'khîr fî Dîwân al-Nâbighah al-Dhubyanî: Dirâsah Dilâliyyah Taṭbîqiyyah Ma'nawiyyah* (Ellipsis and Fronting and Backing in the Divan of al-Nâbighah al-Dhubyanî: A semantic applied study). Damascus: Dâr Tlâs.

This study aims at correcting a deficiency in those studies which deal with the applied aspects of Arabic rhetoric. It assumes that Arabic rhetorical theory sometimes makes the mistake of endorsing various elements that are completely detached from the circumstances in which they were formulated.

This is a practical study dealing with one writer, the pre-Islamic poet al-Nâbighah al-Dhubyanî. As such, it is restricted to a certain level of the

language and to a specific time and place. Although it shows some similarities with the studies dealing with Arabic rhetoric, it is very different from grammatical studies. It is primarily an applied study, but is concerned also with literary criticism.

## 1.6 An overview of the contents of the study

The present study is made up of six chapters in addition to this introductory chapter. Chapter Two offers a brief historical account of traditional Arabic linguistic studies. It seeks to identify the main reasons behind the establishment of Arabic linguistics and the environment that facilitated their development. It then deals briefly with the most important linguistic tendencies which emerged subsequently and the most important linguistic schools, of both grammar and rhetoric. It touches lightly on the history of Arabic linguistic studies. It also includes an explanation of some of the most important principles on which Arabic linguistic thought is based, including causation (*al-ta'lîl*) and analogy (*al-qiyâs*).

Chapter Three is devoted to the concept of the sentence in Arabic linguistic thought, its elements and its classifications. It discusses these matters by reference to the views of the most prominent Arab linguists. It also discusses the concept of the sentence put forward by both grammarians and rhetoricians, and tries to identify the differences between the two approaches. It explains in some detail the main elements which form the basis of the process of attribution (*isnâd*) and presents a study of the assumed structure of the sentence inferred by traditional Arab linguists.

Chapter Four offers a detailed explanation of the theory of government (*'amal*) which has dominated Arabic sentential studies from their inception up to the present time. It registers the views of the leaders of the Baṣran and Kūfan schools and discusses their disputes about the determination of the governing and influenced elements. It also discusses views put forward in opposition to this theory, both now and in the past, and explains the most significant amendments put forward by contemporary Arab linguists.

Chapter Five is devoted to the study of ellipsis in Arabic grammatical thought. This chapter discusses most of the types of Arabic sentence which Arab grammarians regard as elliptical, and the way in which Arab grammarians estimate ellipted elements. It begins with an explanation of the terms used by Arab grammarians in dealing with ellipsis. Useful means for the identification of ellipted elements, including situational indicators (*al-qarâ'in al-hâliyyah*) and verbal indicators (*al-qarâ'in al-laḥẓiyyah*), are also covered. The chapter also discusses some of the reasons Arab grammarians put forward to explain why ellipsis takes place, and the most important considerations that should be taken into account when dealing with elliptical sentences. Finally, it discusses a number of sentences which were the focus of considerable dispute between the Baṣran and Kūfan schools regarding the question of ellipted elements.

Chapter Six deals with ellipsis in traditional Arabic rhetorical studies. This chapter discusses the rhetorical purposes which Arab linguists think ellipsis serves and the most important positions in which ellipsis is regarded as desirable from the point of view of eloquence. The chapter also offers a brief comparison

between the rhetorical treatment of ellipsis in Arabic and Halliday and Hasan's treatment of ellipsis in English.

Chapter Seven summarises the most important conclusions reached in this study. These include general findings relating to sentence analysis and ellipsis in Arabic in both grammatical and rhetorical studies. Additional findings are put forward concerning some of the principles on which Arabic linguistics is based, as demonstrated by the study of sentence analysis. The chapter also includes recommendations for further study.

## **1.7 Notes on translation, transliteration and dates**

### **1.7.1 Translation**

All translations of Arabic texts other than the Qur'ân are by the present writer unless otherwise stated. All translations of the Qur'anic verses are taken from A. Yusuf Ali (1983), *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Brentwood, Maryland: Amana Corporation).



## 1.7.2 Transliteration

The system used for transliterating Arabic is as follows:<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Consonants

ص	ش	س	ز	ر	ذ	د	خ	ح	ج	ث	ت	ب	ء
s	sh	s	z	r	dh	d	kh	h	j	th	t	b	'

ي	و	هـ	ن	م	ل	ك	ق	ف	غ	ع	ظ	ط	ض
y	w	h	n	m	l	k	q	f	gh	'	z	t	d

### 2. Short vowels

—	—	—
a	i	u

---

<sup>1</sup> This system is the same as that used by the Library of Congress, with the exception that the dots under the letters have been replaced by a dash since the software used in producing this thesis is incapable of producing the dots. Likewise the dash above the letters to represent long vowels in Arabic is replaced by the symbol ^.

## 3. Long vowels

ا	و	ي
â	û	î

## 4. Diphthongs

اَـ	وَـ
ay	aw

5. The *hamzah* ( ' ) is deleted from the initial position and after the definite article *al*. For example, the word '*ism*' will be written as *ism* and the word *al- 'ibtidâ'* will be written *al-ibtidâ'*. However, if the *hamzah* occurs in the middle or at the end of words it will be included, as for example in *su'âl* (question) and *masâ'* (evening).
6. The definite article *al-* (the) is written, regardless of its phonological environment, e. g. *al-qamar* (the moon), *al-shams* (the sun).
7. The consonant *h*, when occurring in final position, is written *h*, as in *madrasah* (school). But in the annexation *idâfah* it is written *at*, as in *madras-at al-Basrah* (the Basran school).
8. The parsing signs '*alâmât al-i'râb*', which appear at the last radicals of Arabic words, are separated from the original words by a small dash (-), as in *kitâb-un* (a book).

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7. The consonant *h*, when occurring in final position, is written *h*, as in *madrasah* (school). But in the annexation *idâfah* it is written *at*, as in *madras-at al-Baṣrah* (the Baṣran school).
8. The parsing signs '*alâmât al-i'râb*', which appear at the last radicals of Arabic words, are separated from the original words by a small dash (-), as in *kitâb-un* (a book).

### **1.7.3 Dates**

Dates relating to Arabic and Islamic history or to Arab scholars are given in Hegira and Christian calendars, the former coming first, for example Ibn Hishâm (761/1359). A date after a person's name refers to the year of his death, unless otherwise specified.

## CHAPTER TWO

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Arabs have spoken [their language] in a natural way. They knew their language and established in their minds its various interpretations; but they did not pass these interpretations down to us. For my part I interpreted what I consider as causes [of the linguistic phenomenon].

al-Khalil Ibn Aḥmad (175/791)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Ḥassân (1982: 177); Amaireh (1987: 25).

## 2.1 Introduction

Since this research is concerned with sentence analysis in the Arabic linguistic tradition, it is appropriate to offer here a brief historical background of Arabic linguistics.<sup>1</sup> This chapter forms the basis for the other chapters of the study because the reader can refer to it to ascertain the historical background for the various arguments.

This chapter offers a brief description of the most important Arabic linguistic schools and lines of thinking. It also considers the various factors that have contributed to the development of linguistic studies from grammatical studies, which serve educational purposes, and the appearance of the various traditional linguistic schools up until the emergence of rhetorical studies as a discipline combining syntactic and semantic elements.

This chapter will not be confined to historical factors only, but will also cover other equally important issues in order to provide a complete outline of the constituents of Arabic linguistic thought. Such issues constitute the basic principles of Arabic linguistics, and consideration of them may reveal to us more about Arabic linguistic thought. These include (1) *qiyâs* (analogy) and (2) *ta'îl* (causation). These issues and their role in medieval Arab linguistics will be discussed.

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<sup>1</sup> It is not the author's aim in this chapter to give a detailed history of Arabic linguistics. For a history of Arabic linguistics see (al-Afghânî 1968; Abû al-Tayyib 1955; al-Suyûtî 1964; al-Tantâwî 1995; Talmon 1985).

## 2.2 The inception of Arabic linguistic studies

The life of the Arabs has been particularly occupied by the study of their language. The interest which the Arabs had in their language had both national and religious bases. Poetry was and continues to be the most important form of the art of eloquent speech. This is believed to have united them and strengthened their awareness of being one nation. The Arabs were known for their love of poetry. They loved to compose poetry, recite it in their meetings and learn it by heart. Their gatherings were like forums for evaluating and assessing the eloquence of poets from various parts of Arabia.

The Arabic language is the language of the Qur'anic revelation, the Arabs' awareness of their tongue became even stronger and the status of Arabic was enhanced. Muslims consider the style of the Qur'ân to be a solid proof of the highly respected status of the Arabic language.

The Arabs became more aware of their language after it was chosen to be the language of the Qur'anic revelation. The Qur'ânic text is highly inflected. For this reason Muslim scholars were concerned that the parsing signs (*ḥarakât al-i'râb*) might be lost and that might lead to wrong readings of the Qur'an which they believed to be the word of God and thus it may not be edited or rewritten. (cf. al-Ḥamawî 1979: 17–35; al-Qawzî 1994).

Most scholars believe that the founder of Arabic grammar was Abû al-Aswad al-Du'alî. It is narrated that in the early days of grammar studies, Abû al-Aswad's daughter had one day erred by asking her father the following: *mâ aḥsan-u al-samâ-i* and when her father heard her saying this he understood that she wanted to ask what was the most beautiful thing in the sky, but this was not what she meant. She was in fact not asking a question, but only wondering. This confusion had arisen because Abû al-Aswad's daughter had simply made a parsing mistake (cf. Dayf 1968: 15). By way of explaining this issue, it should be remembered that the assumed structures of the two sentences are as follows:

#### The exclamative

<i>Mâ</i>	In the position of the nominative case as subject of the nominal sentence ( <i>mubtada'</i> ), because it means <i>shay'</i> (something)
<i>Aḥsana</i>	Verb in the past tense; the subject is a hidden pronoun whose estimation is <i>huwa</i> and which is connected to <i>mâ</i>
<i>al-samâ'-a</i>	Direct object. The verbal sentence <i>aḥsana al-samâ'-a</i> is in the position of the nominative case since it is a predicate ( <i>khavar</i> )



### The interrogative

<i>mâ</i>	Interrogative particle in the position of the nominative case in place of the subject of the nominal sentence <i>mubtada'</i>
<i>aḥsan-u</i>	Predicate ( <i>khavar</i> )
<i>al-samâ'-i</i>	Post-fixed element ( <i>mudâf ilayh</i> ) governed in the genitive case

The parsing mistake made by Abu al-Aswad's daughter is what Arab linguists later called *al-laḥn* (solecism). Abû al-Tayyib argues that *al-laḥn* appeared at an earlier stage than grammar studies:

*wa i'lam anna awwal-a mâ ikhtalla min kalâm-i al-'arab wa aḥwaja ilâ al-ta'allum al-i'râb li-anna al-laḥn zahara fî kalâm-i al-mawâlî wa al-muta'arribîn min 'ahd al-nabiyy ṣallâ allâh 'alayh wa sallam fa-qad rawaynâ anna rajul-an laḥana bi-ḥadratih-i fa-qâl: arshidû akhâkum fa-qad ḍall, wa qâl Abû Bakr la-an aqra' fa-usqit aḥabb-u 'alayya min an aqra' fa-alḥan*

(al-Suyûfî [n. d.], vol. 2, pp. 396–397)

Know that the first thing people do wrong in the Arabic language, and one which must be learned, is parsing signs because mistakes started to appear in the Arabic language of the freed slaves and naturalised Arabs since the time of the Prophet. We have related that a man made a mistake in reading in the presence of the Prophet, who immediately said “Put your brother on the right track because he strayed”. Then Abu Bakr added “I would prefer to read and miss [words] than to read and make a [grammatical] mistake”.

Arabic linguists use the term *lahn* to refer to the incorrect speaking of the Arabic language. Most scholars believe that the pre-Islamic era was free from *lahn*, because Arabs spoke the language in a correct, natural manner before they came into contact with foreigners. One proponent of this view was Abû Bakr al-Zabîdî (1954: 4), who writes:

*fa-ikhtalaṭa al-‘Arabî bi-al-Nabaṭî wa iltaqâ al-Ḥijâzî bi al-Fârisî wa dakhala al-dîn akhlât-u al-umam wa sawaqat al-kalâm, fa-waqa-‘a al-khalal-u fî al-kalâm wa bada ‘a al-lahn-u fî alsinat-i al-‘awâmm*

The Arabs mixed with the Nabateans and the people of Hijaz met the people of Persia, while people from various nationalities and far places adopted Islam as their religion, and hence incorrect speaking of the Arabic language started to develop among the common people.

It has been argued that *lahn* also occurred during the early Islamic era. The story is told that ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattâb, the second Caliph in Islam, passed some men who were training in archery. They were not proficient at it and he became angry with them for not being able to shoot properly and told them that they should do better. One of them replied to him, saying *nahn-u qawm-un muta‘allimîn* “We are trainees”. Caliph ‘Umar said to them *wa allâh-i la-khaṭa‘ukum fî lisânikum ashadd-u ‘alayya min khaṭa‘ikum fî ramyikum* “By God, your language is worse than your shooting”. This was because the archer should have said *muta‘allimûn*, in the nominative (cf. Ibn Jinnî 1957 vol. 2, p. 8; al-Tanṭâwî 1995: 16, al-Yâsîn 1980: 34).

*lahn* appears to have started after the Muslims conquered Iraq and went beyond the traditional borders of the Arabian Peninsula, a period during which many non-Arabs embraced Islam. The first signs of *lahn* came with abandonment of *i'râb* (cf. al-Ṣâlih 1960: 132). It is only when *lahn* found its way into the readings of the Qur'ân that Muslim scholars started to take it more seriously, and this was when the need was first felt to initiate Arabic linguistics.

When *lahn* became common, influential Muslims thought of taking measures to prevent it from becoming endemic in the language and to preserve the language of the Qur'ân. These measures are outlined below.

Wealthy Muslim families ensured that their children spoke correct Arabic because it was a requirement that anyone wishing to take a government post should speak correct classical Arabic. Candidates for such posts had to master the classical Arabic language in order to be able to address the various Arab tribes and to correctly recite Qur'ânic verses, the Hadîth and poetry. The fewer mistakes an official made, the more his audience respected him (Fuck 1980: 36). Some families used to send their children to the desert to make them grow up in an environment in which everybody spoke correct Arabic and to acquire the habit of speaking correct Arabic away from the influence of the cosmopolitan towns and cities (al-Suyûtî [n. d.], vol. 1, p. 172 al-Yâsîn 1980: 42).

It can be argued that *lahn* was the main factor which led to the emergence of Arabic linguistics. The need to understand the Holy Qur'ân as the source of the Islamic jurisprudence that governs the life of all Muslims was also a very crucial element in shaping Arabic grammar. It is argued that the first ever linguistic

activity was carried out by ‘Abd Allah Ibn ‘Abbâs (67/686) when he interpreted the Qur’ân by the use of Arabic poetry. This tells us something about early attempts to determine the meanings of Arabic expressions and in turn the attempts that were made to understand accurately the meaning of the verses of the Qur’ân as a prerequisite for deriving religious rules from it.

*Lahn* became quite common among foreigners following the expansion of the Islamic State. With the conquering of new lands by Islamic forces more and more people embraced Islam as their new religion, and this raised fears among the Arabs that their language might become contaminated by the languages of these new converts to Islam. It is also possible that Arabs thought of establishing Arabic Linguistics for a scholarly aim only. Arab scholars realised the need to lay down the rules for studying the Arabic language. (cf. Dayf 1968: 11).

### 2.3 The Baṣran school

When Muslims conquered Iraq they built the city of Baṣrah. That was during the reign of the Second Caliph of Islam ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭâb. Since then, the city has been an important cultural centre. Situated on the Gulf and on the major trade route joining central Iran to the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula, it played a

leading role in the development of Arabic grammar (cf. Sayyid 1968: 406). Its unique geographical location made it a major cultural centre combining pure Arabic culture with Persian and Indian cultures. This close contact that Baṣrah had with foreign cultures perhaps explains why the city took a leading role in developing Arabic grammar and in formulating its general guiding principles.

‘Abdullah Ibn Abî Ishâq al-Ḥadramî (117/733) and his student Abû ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Alâ’ (154/770), were among the most famous grammarians to establish grammatical studies in Baṣrah. These two great grammarians, however, differed in terms of the use of analogy (*qiyâs*). Al-Ḥadramî was very strict regarding the use of *qiyâs* and criticised everybody else for failing to follow his example, whereas Abû al-‘Alâ’ was more lenient in this respect and based his judgements on the most common views (cf. al-Ṭanṭâwî 1995: 39).

The Baṣran grammarians were well known of their emphasis on correct speech. They did not consider any unusual usage. They stressed the importance of using the speech of pure Arabs.

Al-Khalîl Ibn Aḥmad al-Farâhîdî (175/791) was born in Baṣrah. He was dedicated to attending the circles of Ḥadîth and Islamic law in addition to circles of Arabic linguistics. Later on, he became a great Baṣran grammarian. He studied under both ‘Isa Ibn ‘Umar and Abû ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Alâ.. He wrote about prepositions and parsing. Though Arabic grammar was founded before al-Khalîl, it was said that he highly contributed to the field. Al-Khalîl was the main teacher of Sibawayh (cf. Carter 1990: 121).

He is considered as one of the founders of the Baṣran school and one of the theorists who adopted the Baṣran basic principles that proposes that grammar should be formulated according to the speech of purely native Arabic sources, especially readings of the Holy Qur'an and poetry of the pre-Islamic era in addition the Arabic used by the tribes who settled in the Arabian Peninsula as non-contaminated speakers. When we read Sibawayh's work, we can easily recognise Al-Kalīl's contribution to the Arabic theory of government as very obvious (cf. Dayf 1968: 30-56).

## 2.4 Sibawayh and his Book

Sibawayh's *al-kitāb* (180/796) is the oldest Arabic grammatical work that has survived. It includes an explanation of the Arabic grammatical theory illustrated by examples from the Qur'an and pre-Islamic poetry. Nevertheless, Sibawayh included the views of the grammarians who preceded him particularly his main teacher al-Khalīl Ibn Ahmad (cf. Abdeljaber 1985: 57-62; Versteegh 1997a: 44). The following verses of poetry make a passing reference to two other lost works by 'Isā Ibn 'Umar (149/766):

*baṭala al-naḥw-u jamī'-an kulluh-u*

*ghayra mā allafa 'Isā Ibn 'Umar*

*dhāka ikmāl-un wa ḥādhā jamī'-un*

*fa-humā li al-nās-i shams-un wa qamar*

*wa humâ bâbân-i sârâ hikmat-an*  
*wa arâhâ min qiyâs-in wa nazar*

All [Arabic] grammar is defunct  
 except what ‘Isâ Ibn ‘Umar has written  
 One of them is complete and the other is universal  
 They were like sun and moon  
 They became like a piece of wisdom  
 and freed [people] from analogy and consultation.

(al-Tantâwî 1995: 39)

Sibawayh’s book *al-Kitâb* is highly regarded by Arab grammarians. Sibawayh did not use the word *nahw* to mean what we know today as grammar. He considered language as a way of doing things, whereas *nahw* means simply a way of speaking. The Book consists of 820 topics. These topics are not systematic. Sibawayh hops from one topic to another and then comes back to his primary topic. Most of Sibawayh’s terminology is very complicated and difficult to understand. Therefore, later grammarians wrote many extensive commentaries to explain it. These commentaries made *al-kitâb* readable and understandable to the students of Arabic grammar because they are simple, clear and contain good examples (cf. Versteegh 1997; al-Tantâwî 1995; Abdejaber 1985).

## 2.5 The Kûfan school

Most scholars think that the founder of the Kûfan school is Abû Ja'far al-Ru'âsî (252/389). The Baṣran school started to establish the first foundations of Arabic grammar. They considered parsing signs *i'râb* as their main subject which was carried out initially by Abû al-Aswad al-Du'alî (69/688). The Kûfans, on the other hand, were interested in Qur'ânic readings, and the reciting of classical poetry (cf. al-Makhzûmî 1958: 18–22). The location of the city of Kûfah away from foreign influences was among the major factors that shaped the life of people in Kûfah. The people's way of life in the city of Kûfah was Bedouin one, and thus it attracted many of the Bedouin Arabs who spoke pure Arabic (cf. *ibid.*: 3–4).

The Kûfan approach to linguistic studies was quite different from that of the Baṣran's in terms of adopting new grammatical rules that were based on the spoken language of few people.

This is, in contrast to the approach of the Baṣran school, which was very strict in adopting grammatical rules. They pass no rule until it is sure that it is supported by a large number of people who speak pure Arabic. The Kûfans' use of grammatical terms is quite different from that of the Baṣrans, as the following table shows:



BASRAN TERMS	KÛFAN TERMS	ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS
<i>Tamyîz</i>	<i>Mufassir</i>	Specification
<i>Ma'tûf</i>	<i>Mardûd</i>	Coupled
<i>Harf jarr</i>	<i>Sifah</i>	Proposition governing the genitive
<i>Munsarif</i>	<i>Jârî</i>	Declinable
<i>Yaksir</i>	<i>Yakhfid</i>	To govern in the genitive
<i>fi'l mabnî li al-majhûl</i>	<i>fi'l lam yusamma</i> <i>fâ'iluh</i>	Passive voice

Moreover, while the Baṣrans divide the verb into three tenses (past tense, present tense and imperative), the Kûfans classify the verb into past tense, present tense and continuous tense (*dâ'im*) by which they mean the active participle (*ism al-fâ'il*). The Kûfans suggest that what the Baṣrans call an imperative verb (*fi'l amr*) should be assumed as a present tense verb preceded by the *lām* of command, which is afterward deleted (cf. Abed 1991: 130–131).

In general, it can be argued that the Kûfan theories have, throughout the history of Arabic linguistics, failed to attract the attention of Arab linguists, and it would not be an exaggeration to say that this has been the case even up to the present day.

## 2.6 The school of Baghdâd

Being the capital of the Abbasid caliphate, Baghdâd attracted a large number of Arab linguists from different parts of the Islamic world. The linguistic school of Baghdad adopted a new method of Arabic linguistic thinking that includes both Baṣran and Kûfan schools. The most pioneering Baghdadian linguist was Ibn Jinnî (392/1001) whose book *al-khaṣā'is* contains the basic rules of Arabic linguistic theory. It includes grammar, morphology and phonology. It is considered one of the most important studies in the history of Arabic linguistics. Ibn Jinnî presents in his book a good discussion of Baṣran Kûfan disputes regarding grammatical studies. For example, he explains the Arabic theory of government which enjoyed a great deal of dispute among Arab grammarians. Another distinguished Baghdadian linguist was al-Zajjājī who wrote a book entitled *al-Idāh* in which he explained the motives of Arabic grammar, as well as *al-Jumal* which was very concise and well recognized by learners of Arabic grammar in his time (cf. Dayf 1968: 254-287).

## 2.7. The Andalusian school

Arabic was introduced to Andalusian people after Islam entered the region. Qurtoba was the main cultural centre that attracted many Arab linguists from all over the Islamic world. One of the most famous Andalûsian linguists was Ibn Mađâ' al-Qurṭubî, who was well known for his bold ideas which contradicted those of the majority of linguists before him. He called for the abolition of the Arabic theory of government, (*'amal*) for not going into great length regarding causation (*al-ta'îl*) when analysing the sentence. The work of Ibn Mađâ' shows that the Andalûsian linguists were trying to have their own independent grammatical school compared to the schools of Baṣrah and Kûfah. This is not to say that the Andalusians did not adopt some principles from these two major schools (cf. Dayf 1968: 288-292).

## 2.8. The Egyptian school

Serious linguistic studies did not appear in Egypt until late in the fourth Islamic century. Ibn Barri (582/1186) was a very famous Egyptian linguist who wrote many books on Arabic grammar, including: (a) *al-lubâb*, (b) *jawâb al-masâ'il al-'ashr*, and (c) *hâshiyah 'alâ kitâb al-ṣiḥâh*. He focused in his writings on grammar, lexicography and morphology. Another famous Egyptian grammarian

was Ibn al-Hājib (646/1248), who wrote a number of books, the most famous of which was *al-kāfiyah*, which is a concise study of Arabic grammar. Apparently the author wrote it with the objective of making grammar easy to learn for beginners (Dayf 1968: 329). In his writings he justified a number of linguistic phenomena. The Egyptian school is not regarded as completely independent in terms of methodology. Egyptian linguists, including the most celebrated, Ibn Hishām, were influenced by their predecessors from the Baṣran and Kūfan schools.

It can be argued that the Egyptian linguists were strongly influenced by the early Baṣran and Kūfan theories, as evidenced in the writings of Ibn Hishām (761/1359). The adoption of the Baṣran and Kūfan ideas was the result of lack of established principles as regards grammatical theories (cf. Dayf 1968: 327-327; al-Tanṭāwī 1995: 286-270). Dayf (1968: 327) argues that the Egyptian interest in Arabic grammar was basically directed towards preserving the Qur'anic texts.

Ibn Khaldūn writes that Ibn-Hishām was more knowledgeable about Arabic grammar than Sibawayh himself (*anhā min Sibawayh*). This statement, however, should not be taken literally, because it was intended as an indirect expression referring to Ibn Hishām's wide knowledge of Arabic linguistics (cf. Gully 1991: 2).

Ibn Hishām wrote a number of books, most of which deal with grammar. The most important of these is *Mughnī al-labīb 'an kutub al-a'arīb*. Since early times scholars have praised this book. Pioneer Arab grammarians before Ibn

Hisham neglected the study of sentence analysis particularly the semantic aspects. They considered the sentence analysis a secondary subject. The grammatical aspects were their main aim. Ibn Hisham in his book "*Mughni al-Labib*", however, tried to fill this gap and gave the sentence analysis more attention in terms of both syntax and semantics.

Ibn Khaldûn (1967: 547) writes:

*istawfâ fih-i ahkâm-a al-i'râb mujmalah wa mufasssalah wa takallama  
'alâ al-hurûf wa al-mufradât wa al-jumal wa hadhaf-a mâ fî al-  
sinâ'ah min al-tikrâr*

In it he wrote about the rules of parsing, both in detail and in general, and he spoke about particles, singulars, sentences, and removed repetition.

Part one of the book demonstrates particles in the Arabic language (*al-hurûf wa al-adawât*), while the other part displays the different types of sentence, adverbs (*zurûf*) and prepositional phrases (*al-jârr wa al-majrûr*). Ibn-Hishâm compares the opinions of Baṣran linguists with those of the Kûfans. He then provides some other views that support his own views.<sup>1</sup>

The schools of Baghdâd, Egypt and Andalusia were influenced by the two major schools in Baṣrah and Kûfah. This is because the basic principles of Arabic grammatical studies were carried out by the early Baṣran grammarians. The sources of linguistic materials used by both schools were the Qur'ân and pre-Islamic poetry.

The Qur'ân and its readings is believed by linguists to be the most reliable source of linguistic and grammatical description. At the beginning of Arabic linguistic studies there was no agreement to what readings of the Qur'an should be considered. While the Kufans suggest that all the Qur'anic readings should be

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<sup>1</sup> The most recent study in the West of *Mughnî al-Labîb* book by Ibn Hishâm is a doctoral thesis by A. Gully: *Aspects of semantics, Grammatical Categories and Other Linguistic Considerations in Ibn Hishâm's Mughnî al-Labîb*. In it the author discusses the grammatical and semantic aspects of *Mughnî al-Labîb* in detail and the importance of *Mughnî* in the history of Arabic linguistics.

included, the Baṣrans argue that only some readings should be used. (cf. Sayyid 1968: 164–167).

This was because the Baṣrans were famous of their philosophical discussion that did not attract the consent of the Kûfan school. Instead the Kûfan school used a greater amount of Arabic poetry in addition to the Qur’anic readings. One can argue that the Kûfan school was closer to the actual use of language. (cf. *ibid.*: 230; al-Makhzûmî 1958: 376–389). The Baṣrans and the Kûfans view the fundamental aim of grammatical studies is to investigate the changes of parsing signs and of the reasons behind this change. The Arabic theory of government is one of the main arguments that occupied Arabic linguistic thinking for centuries. The debate between these well-known schools was centered around the attribution of the power to govern. It was debated whether this power should be attributed to the verb or noun on the one hand and whether this power should be attributed to explicit or implicit governing elements. (cf. 4.5).<sup>1</sup>

## 2.9 Foreign influence

The maturity that characterised Arab linguistics in the fields of grammar and lexicography has led some present-day scholars to believe that Arab linguists were influenced by a number of earlier foreign linguistic works. Three nations in

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<sup>1</sup> The term *madrasah* (school) is not used in traditional Arabic sources. Modern Arab scholars use it as an equivalent of the traditional term *madhhab* (sect).

particular have exerted an influence on Arabic linguistics: Greece, India and Persia.

Greek influence can be discerned in the field of grammar studies. It was indirect, owing more to the fact that most Arab grammarians were highly skilled in Greek logic than to any specific translation work from the Greek that they undertook. This influence operated in terms of the general organisation of Arabic linguistic works, and also in more specific areas such as the classification of parts of speech. It is in terms of the practice of analogy, however, that the influence operated most strongly. Versteegh (1993: 25) offers the following list of terms to demonstrate the connection between Arabic and Greek grammatical studies.

ARABIC TERMS	GREEK TERMS	CORRESPONDING ENGLISH TERMS
<i>Ḥarf</i>	Stoicheion	Particle
<i>i'rāb</i>	Hellenismos	Declension
<i>Ṣarf</i>	Klisis	Inflection
<i>raf'</i>	orthe (ptosis)	Nominative
<i>ta'addīn</i>	Metabasis	Transitivity
<i>Ḥarakah</i>	Kinesis	Vowel
<i>'illal</i>	Pathe	sound changes
<i>kalām/qawl</i>	logos/lexis	sentence/utterance
<i>fā'ida</i>	Autoteleia	Meaningfulness
<i>ma'nā</i>	Lekton	Meaning



Greek influence on Arabic linguistics was, then, considerable, and operated in the same way as a similar influence in the fields of logic and philosophy (Versteegh 1977: 1). Greek was used throughout the Hellenistic world, at least in every place of cultural significance; it operated at first as a kind of *lingua franca* for the cultured classes, but soon independent cultural centres sprang up, growing in importance as the power of Greece itself waned (*ibid.*: 1-2). The Hellenistic universities offered courses in Greek language as well as in Greek philosophy. Eventually, East Syriac replaced Greek as the language of education in some parts of the middle east. The Greek language powerfully influenced Syriac, which thus functioned as an important intermediary language between Greek and Arabic (cf. Carter 1990: 119).

Indian linguistics was particularly developed in the areas of lexicography and phonology. Indian linguists differentiated between vowels and consonants, reflecting the distinction in their writing system. The first Arabic dictionary, written by al-Khalîl Ibn Aḥmad al-Farâhîdî (175/794), one of Sibawayh's teachers, may be assumed to show Indian influence. Al-Khalîl's aim was to collect Arabic words and expressions, but he was dissatisfied with the order in which the letters of the alphabet were commonly presented, and consequently he rearranged the letters of the alphabet to make the alphabet begin with the letter 'ayn, an extreme guttural sound produced back in the mouth and throat; and hence his dictionary was called *mu'jam al-'ayn*. The order in which the rest of the letters of the alphabet appeared is as follows:

, 'H, H, KH, GH - Q, K - J, SH, D - S, S, Z - T, D, T, Z, TH, DH, R, L, N,  
F, B, M, W, A, Y.

According to this classification the letters of the alphabet were divided into nine groups depending on the part of the mouth and larynx that produces the sound of the letter in question. The first group, beginning with the letter 'ayn, was called *halqiyyah* (pharyngeal); the second group, comprising the two letters *qâf* and *kâf*, was called *lahawiyyah* (uvular); the third group, beginning with the letter *jîm*, was called *shajariyyah* (palatal); the fourth group, beginning with the letter *ṣâd*, was called *asaliyyah* (coronal); the fifth group, beginning with the letter *ṭ*, was called *nuṭ'iyyah* (alveolar); the sixth group, beginning with the letter *ẓa'*, was called *lithawiyyah* (inter-dental); the seventh group, beginning with the letter *râ'* was called *dhalaqiyyah* (liquid); the eighth group, beginning with the letter *fâ'*, was called *shafawiyyah* (labial); and the ninth and final group was called *hawâ'iyyah* (vocalic).

After he had finished ordering the letters of the alphabet in the above manner al-Khalîl then turned his attention to word structure. He saw the roots of Arabic words as consisting either of two letters (like *qad*, *lam*, *hal* and *law*), three letters, (like *ḍarab-a*, *kharaj-a* and *dakhal-a*), four letters, (like *dahraj-a*), or five letters, (like *iqsha'arr-a*).

He explains this in the introduction to his book (1988: 55) where he says:

*wa lays-a li al-'arab-i binâ'-un fî al-asmâ'-i wa lâ fî al-'af'âl-i  
akthar-u min khamsat-i ahruf, fa-mahmâ wajdat-a ziyâdah 'alâ  
khamsat-i ahruf fî fî'l-in wa ism-in, fa-i'lam annahâ zâ'idah 'alâ al-  
binâ'*

There is no word in Arabic in the structure of nouns or verbs that consists of more than five letters, and if you find a word with more than this number it surely involves more than the basic root.

The only evidence for Persian influence on Arab linguistics is that the author of the first Arab grammar, Sibawayh, was himself of Persian origin. It is very likely that his work incorporates elements of Persian grammatical thinking, which accordingly were transferred into Arab linguistics. Sibawayh was highly educated in Persian culture, but chose Arabic as his field owing to Islamic cultural dominance. One might set against this theory, however, the fact that his grammar, while making frequent mention of previous Arab linguists, makes no reference at all to any Persian scholars.

Minor similarities between Arabic, Greek and Indian linguistics prove that Arab linguists were well aware of and had studied the work of their Greek and Indian predecessors, and probably that their studies were influenced, however slightly, by Greek and Indian linguistic studies. However, this does not mean that Arabic linguistic theory was totally constructed on a Greek or Indian basis.

Probably the insistence of Arab linguists on forging a link between linguistic studies and the holy Qur'ân forbade them from adopting Greek or Indian linguistic theories in their entirety. Moreover, historians agree that Arabic linguistic studies had begun before any translation from Greek into Arabic

(Sayyid, 1968: 100–101). We do not have enough information to determine whether the linguistic field was influenced more than other fields. The maturity of early Arabic linguistic studies, however, cannot be attributed to the influence of the cultures of other nations before the Arabs, but should be attributed mainly to the fact that the Arabs considered Arabic linguistic studies to be a religious duty.

The literary knowledge of the Arabs before the coming of Islam was very primitive and revolved mainly around the composition and reciting of poetry and articulate speech. In addition, Arabs were engaged in the study of their own ancestral history, tribal divisions and tribal conflicts and the wars that broke out between the various tribes. They began to diversify and expand their cultural interests only after the coming of Islam, at first placing considerable emphasis on the Qur'an, and later expanding their knowledge to include other fields, but they basically remained closely tied to the religion of Islam and the Arabic language.

Scholars who believe that Arabic linguistics have been subject to foreign influence – in particular, those who believe they have been influenced by Persia – advance the argument that grammatical studies in Arabic originated in Iraq, which was originally part of the Persian Empire. These scholars make the point that a number of prominent Arabic linguists were ethnically Persian. This argument, however, ignores the fact that Iraq contained a large foreign population including many non-Arabs, who, eager as they were to advance their knowledge of Arabic in order to solidify their social standing, were reliant on the work of Arabic grammarians many of whom happened to be Persian.

## 2.10 Arabic rhetorical studies (*balâghah*)

The practitioners of rhetorical studies do not constitute a separate linguistic school similar to the Baṣran and the Kūfan schools, for example. Rather, they were individual scholars who took a different point of view from that of the grammarians' and who adopted a methodology that places more emphasis on the meaning of the sentence (i.e. they were not concerned only with the sentence being grammatically correct).

Literally, the word *balâghah* means to reach an end or to achieve a goal. Ibn Manzûr (1956 vol. 8, p. 419–420) defines *balâghah*, as used by linguists, as follows:

*al-balâghah al-faṣāḥah wa al-balgh wa al-bilgh al-balîgh min al-rijâl  
wa rajul-un balîgh wa balgh wa bilgh ḥasan-u al-kālâm faṣīḥuh  
yablugh-u bi- 'ibârat-i lisânih kunh mâ fî qalbih*

*balâghah* is eloquence of speech and an eloquent person is a person who is a good and articulate speaker who uses his articulation to achieve the essence of what he has in his mind.

It was during the Abbasid era that *balâghah* became widespread and more diverse in character. These developments were a result of the cultural sophistication that characterised that era.

### 2.10.1 Sibawayh and rhetoric

Sibawayh's book is considered primarily to be a book of grammar. Nonetheless, we can still find remarks in it that can be interpreted as part of *balâghah* as defined by later Arab linguists. An example of this is the following (1975 vol. 1, p. 25):

*hâdhâ bâb-u al-istiqâmah min al-kalâm wa al-ihâlah fa-minh mustaqîm-un ḥasan wa muḥâl wa mustaqîm-un kadhib wa mustaqîm-un qabîḥ wa mâ huwa muḥâl kadhib. fa-ammâ al-mustaqîm al-ḥasan fa-qawluka ataytuka ams wa sa-âtika ghad-an. wa ammâ al-muḥâl fa-an tanquḍ awwal-a kalâmak bi-âkhirih fa-taqûl ataytuka ghad-an wa sa-âtika ams, wa ammâ al-mustaqîm al-kadhib fa-qawluk ḥamalt-u al-jabal wa sharibt mâ' al-baḥr wa naḥwih, wa ammâ al-mustaqîm al-qabîḥ fa-an taḍa'-a al-lafẓ fi ghayr mawḍi'ih naḥw qawlik qad Zayd-an ra'ayt, wa kay Zayd-an y'a'tik wa ashbâh hâdhâ. wa ammâ al-muḥâl al-kadhib fa-an taqûl sawfa ashrab-u mâ' al-baḥr ams*

This is the chapter on correct and impossible speech. It can be correct good, correct impossible, correct but untrue, correct but ill-formed and impossible but untrue. So far as correct good speech is concerned, examples are “I came to you yesterday” and “I will come to you tomorrow”; good impossible speech is to negate in the end what you have mentioned at the beginning of your speech, such as saying “I came to you tomorrow” and “I will come to you yesterday”; correct untrue speech is saying “I carried the mountain” or “I drank the sea water”, and so on. Correct ill-formed speech, on the other hand, is to move words out of their right position such as saying: “*qad Zayd-an ra'ayt-u*”, while impossible untrue speech is like saying “I will drink the sea water yesterday”.

From the above we can see that Sibawayh has tried to divide speech on the basis of meaning. What may be of interest to rhetoricians is what he calls *al-mustaqîm al-kadhib*, of which he gives two examples:

*hamalt-u al-jabal-a*

I carried the mountain

*sharibt-u mâ' al-bahr*

I drank the sea water

Obviously, Sibawayh does not intend the literal meaning of the word *kadhib* (lie). Rather, he meant the metaphoric expression, which he uses in the first example to refer to someone who bears a heavy burden. This is what Arab rhetoricians later called *majâz murakkab* (compound metaphor), because the metaphor is not in the individual words but in the whole sentence. In short Sibawayh rarely makes reference to the aspects of *balâghah* (rhetoric) in the examples he uses, because his main concern is grammar.

### 2.10.2 Al-Jâhiz

Al-Jâhiz (255/868) is considered to be the leader of the *mu'tazilah* sect, whose members were famous for their linguistic skills. They always thought of themselves as defenders of Islamic thought against the followers of other religions. They were also famous for their fierce debates with other Islamic sects which did not share their beliefs. They assumed a neutral position in politics, and

for this reason they were given the name *mu'tazilah* (Sweity 1992: 33–34). Shawqî Dayf (1965: 39) argues that the *mu'tazilah* attempted to explore the views of other nations on rhetoric in order to strike a balance between Arabic and foreign opinions to lay down rules for Arabic rhetoric.

There is no doubt that al-Jâhiz's *al-bayân wa al-tabayîn* is one of the best ancient Arabic books on rhetoric. In this book al-Jâhiz presents a vast collection of observations on Arabic rhetoric, and sometimes even mentions some foreign observations. He also accorded great importance to the selection of the correct words which serve the required meaning, and emphasised that speech must suit the conditions in which it is uttered. This is evident from the following (1961 vol. 1, p. 144 in Dayf 1965: 46):

*wa kalâm-u al-nâs-i fî tabaqât kamâ anna al-nâs anfusahum fî tabaqât  
fa-min al-kalâm-i al-jazl wa al-sakhîf wa al-malîh, wa al-hasan wa al-  
qabîh wa al-samij wa al-khafîf wa al-thaqîl ..... illâ annanî az 'um  
anna sakhîf-a al-alfâz mushâkil li-sakhîf al-ma'ânî wa qad yuhtâj ilâ  
al-sukhf-i fî ba'd al-mawâdî' wa rubbamâ amta' bi-akthar min imtâ'  
al-jazl al-fakhm min al-alfâz wa al-sharîf al-karîm min al-ma'ânî*

People's speeches fall into different classes just as people themselves fall into different classes. There is the chaste speech, the foul speech, the foolish speech, the good speech, the light and the not so light... but I believe that foolish expressions bear foolish meanings and sometimes in certain situations there is a need for foolish expressions, which may be more satisfying than chaste and grand expressions.



Al-Jâhiz (1961 vol. 1, p. 83) draws attention to the fact that speech becomes eloquent if it is concise, its meaning is clear and without any ambiguity whatsoever, and it is clearly understood by the listener.

To sum up, the references made by al-Jâhiz and his remarks on rhetoric are considered the pillars of what later came to be known as rhetoric (*balâghah*). His writings immensely benefited later Arab linguists. Shawqî Dayf (1965: 57–58) goes as far as to regard him as the founder of rhetoric when he says:

*wa la-‘allanâ lâ nubâligh-u idhâ qulnâ ba‘d dhâlika kullih anna al-Jâhiz yu‘add-u bilâ munâzi‘ mu‘assis al-balâghah al-‘arabiyyah*

Perhaps we are not exaggerating if we say after all this, that al-Jâhiz is indisputedly the founder of Arabic rhetoric.

### 2.10.3 Abû Hilâl al-‘Askarî

Al-‘Askarî (395/1004) was the author of a book which he called *al-ṣinâ‘atayn* (The Two Literatures), referring to poetry and prose. He emphasises, in the introduction to this book, the importance of mastering the subject of rhetoric because in his view this is necessary for understanding the eloquence of the Qur’ân and also helps poets and writers to decide which expressions they should use. Despite al-‘Askarî’s praise of al-Jâhiz’s writing, he criticises him for failing to present the issues of rhetoric in an orderly manner (cf. Kanazi 1989).

#### 2.10.4 Al-Jurjânî

Al-Jurjânî's books *Dalâ'il al-i'jâz* and *Asrâr al-balâghah* made him the celebrated figure he is in Arabic linguistics.<sup>1</sup> These are regarded as the basis of Arabic rhetoric. In his studies on rhetoric al-Jurjânî (471/1078) paid special attention to comparing the linguistic style of the Qur'ân with that of ancient Arabic poetry.

Discussions concerning aspects of Islamic theology were at their height during al-Jurjânî's time, and this strongly influenced his linguistic writings. He chose to follow the *ash'arî* school, which was founded by Abû al-Hasan al-Ash'arî (324/935), whose main argument revolves around the following contradictions:

- (1) To say that the Qur'ân was created by God contradicts the Muslims' belief that God and the Qur'ân are eternal and have no beginning or end.
- (2) To say that God has a physical body and organs such as hands and eyes contradicts also the Muslims' belief that God is unique and nothing resembles Him in any way.

The *ash'arî* sect argued that the way out of this contradiction is to adopt the belief that God's words are part of Him and as such they are eternal and they

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<sup>1</sup> One of the most important western studies of al-Jurjânî is that by Kamal Abu Deeb (1979).

do not die: that is, they are not created but their sounds are created. The *ash'arî* sect also argued that the attributes used to describe God's body are meant to describe the functions these organs perform and not the organs themselves. For example, if one says "God's hand", one means His power, and "God's eye" means His knowledge.

Al-Jurjânî applies the *ash'arî* view in his analysis of language by differentiating between the meanings in the human mind and the uttered words. People, in al-Jurjânî's point of view, begin by first thinking of the meanings in their minds and then translating the meaning into words by trying to make the words correspond to what is in their minds.

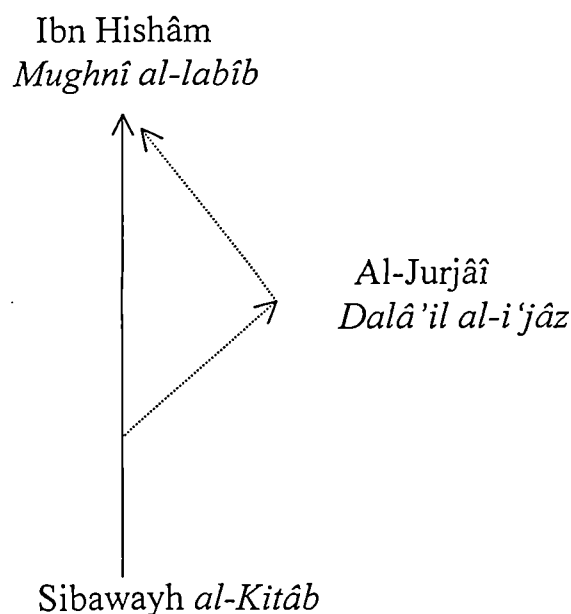
Al-Jurjânî lived in an era when a heated debate was taking place about the nature of Qur'ânic eloquence. All Muslims believe that Arabic speakers cannot produce speech similar to that of the Qur'ân. Some Arab linguists believe that God has deprived human beings of the linguistic skills that would enable them to imitate the Qur'ânic expressions. This is what is known as *al-ṣarfah* (disablement): that is, God has prevented people from imitating Qur'ânic expressions (cf. Zahrân 1987; Larkin 1989). Al-Jurjânî, however, thinks that this idea is wrong and that the eloquence of the Qur'ân lies in the fact that God has produced it to the highest standard of eloquence (i.e. the Qur'ân is eloquent from the point of view of linguistic style). But, linguistic ability is present in people, because if God had deprived people of the linguistic ability to imitate the Qur'ân, that would mean that the Qur'ânic style has no role in the issue of eloquence. It is from this perspective that al-Jurjânî proceeds to make meaning his prime concern,

making use of his wide knowledge of Islamic theology, Arabic grammar and Arabic poetry.

Thus, Arabic linguistic studies started as a grammatical and educational exercise in the hands of Sibawayh, and little by little it developed to include studies concerned with meaning. This continued until it was felt that the study of the meaning needed to be developed as a separate discipline, and this was accomplished by al-Jurjânî in his book *Dalâ'il al-i'jâz*.

Sibawayh laid down the basis of grammar which Arab linguists continued to use as an example and which they all tried to follow. Many books were written to explain or comment on Sibawayh's book, and even in the case of independent books the influence of Sibawayh is quite noticeable even if the style is different. A major shift in Arabic linguistic writings, however, was introduced by al-Jurjânî in his book *Dalâ'il al-i'jâz*, in which he criticised Sibawayh and the grammarians who followed him for placing too much emphasis for structure and grammatical rules without giving meaning the importance it deserves (cf. Versteegh 1997a: 117). For this reason, al-Jurjânî puts all his effort into the study of the meaning, arguing that the study of Islamic theology by itself is not sufficient to prove the eloquence of the Qur'ân and that there is a need for linguistic studies that prove that the Qur'ân surpasses all other forms of Arabic texts. Al-Jurjânî's works were well received by Arab linguists, who appreciated the importance of what al-Jurjânî was calling for. This can be seen in the writings of many succeeding grammarians, where we find many discussions relating to what al-Jurjânî had called for, including his insistence on more attention being paid to the meaning

and to the parsing signs such as what we find in Ibn Hishâm's book *Mughnî al-labîb 'an kutub al-a'ârib*. The relationship between these three important linguistic books is indicated in the following diagram.



## 2.11 Basic principles

As can be seen from the preceding discussion, Arabic linguistic studies were simple in terms of their nature and structure but reflected sincere efforts and devotion on the part of the early linguists. Although Arab linguists were only driven by religious motives to study the Qur'anic text without previous training and experience in conducting linguistic study, they nevertheless made impressive contributions to the field. In their efforts to document linguistic data, traditional Arab linguists adopted certain principles that guided them in the processes of collection and documentation. These principles have predominated in Arabic linguistic thinking to such an extent that they are clear in most linguistic works. Analogy (*qiyâs*) and causation (*ta'lîl*) were the most two important principles. These will be discussed below.

### 2.11.1 Analogy

In the beginning stage of the development of Islamic legal theory, scholars relied heavily on major sources namely, the Qur'an and the Hadîth. With the expansion of the Islamic state and the entrance of new Muslims from vastly different social cultural and geographical backgrounds came its corresponding problems many of which were not specifically addressed by the original sources. Thus analogical deduction was resorted to. This procedure of deriving solutions to legal issues of course had legal approval from the Qur'an and Hadîth.

The tool of analogical deduction over the next few centuries was further developed and concretised by succeeding generations of experts in Islamic jurisprudence of the various schools of thought (*mdhâhib*) into an institutional system within the framework of Islamic legal theory and it reached its pinnacle in the fifth/eleventh century. Arab scholars adopted the principle of analogy when they felt they needed it. As Islam expanded outside the Arabian Peninsula, there were problems that Muslims faced to which their was to answer in the Qur'ân and Sunnah (cf. Al-Yâsîn 1980: 345–347; Baalbaki 1978: 61; Abdeljaber 1985: 210–212; Wolfe 1984: 83)..

Analogy was not only confined to Islamic jurisprudence, but, in fact transcended into traditional Arabic linguistic studies. When dealing with linguistic material, including the Qur'ân, Arab linguists thought that it was their

responsibility to evaluate this material by practising analogy (cf. Ditters 1990: 129). To them, analogy (*qiyâs*) was like deducing something unknown from factual linguistic material. Arabic linguistic theory regards analogy as a significant process because it contributes towards reducing the number of deviations from the pure language. This is because the process of analogy draws upon frequently used material, as the following statement by Sibawayh (1975 vol. 2, p. 82) indicates:

*wa taqûl-u hâdhih-i nâqat-un wa faṣīlahâ râtī'ayn wa qad yaqûl-u ba'dhum hâdhih-i nâqat-un wa faṣīluhâ râtī'ân ... wa al-wajh-u hâdhih-i nâqat-un wa faṣīlahâ râtī'ayn, li-anna hâdhâ akthar fī kalāmihim wa huwa al-qiyâs*

You say *hâdhih-i nâqat-un wa faṣīlahâ râtī'ayn* (This she-camel and her weaned son are grazing). Some of them [Bedouin Arabs] might say *hâdhih-i nâqat-un wa faṣīluhâ râtī'ân*. The first [sentence] is better because it is more common and it should be followed.

Here, Sibawayh advises Arab linguists to use the most commonly used form of language and try to avoid the less common ones, even though he does not say that the other usages are wrong (cf. Ibn al-Sarrâj 1987 vol. 1, p. 57).

A number of pioneering Arab linguists believed that the primary aim of grammatical studies is to deal with analogy. This point is implied in the following line of poetry by al-Kisâ'î ( al-Suyûtî 1964 vol. 2, p. 164):

*innamâ al-naḥw qiyâs-un yuttaba'*



*wa bih-i fī kull-i 'ilm-in yuntafa'*

Grammar surely is analogy that has to be followed;

through it in every field of study it has benefit.

It is important to ascertain what Arab linguists mean by two other terms relating to analogy. These two terms are:

1. *al-maqîs 'alayh* (the linguistic material against which linguists compare, by analogy, other linguistic material). By the term *al-maqîs 'alayh* Arab linguists mean the material whose correctness is proven and which is known to have been used by the native speakers of the language (i.e. the Bedouin Arabs).
2. *al-maqîs* (the linguistic material which is assumed to be correct by analogy). By the term *al-maqîs* Arab linguists mean the newer material which the speaker or writer may use by way of analogy: in other words, the material which the linguist judges to be correct even though they have not heard it spoken by native speakers of the language (cf. Ibn Jinni 1957 vol. 1 pp. 101–103).

Thus, Arab linguists realised that language is a human phenomenon susceptible to change and development. In this respect, they emphasise that it is impossible to describe all the sentences found in the Arabic language. As a result, they have resorted to the principle of analogy in order to establish grammatical rules that can help them in judging the correctness of linguistic material.

Analogy itself is valuable linguistic technique but the problem is with its application where was lack of standard linguistic models. Arab linguists considered the Qur'ân as representing the highest linguistic example, but in so doing they were confronted by the problem that the Qur'ân is susceptible to many different readings, some of which were in agreement with what grammarians had agreed upon in terms of grammar and some of which contradict the grammatical rules. To overcome this problem, grammarians attempted to construe the readings that disagreed with their grammar. Early Arab linguists did not use the Hadîth (the Prophet's sayings) in analogy (*qiyâs*) on the belief that most of the Hadîth was narrated using the meaning and not the exact words of the Prophet Mohammed. Moreover, in some cases the narrators were non-Arabs (*a'âjim*) speaking incorrect Arabic. Thus, for a long time they did not resort to the Hadîth. Moreover, in some cases the narrators were non-Arabs (*a'âjim*) speaking incorrect Arabic. Thus, for a long time they did not resort to the Hadîth. Some Arab linguists, however, think that Hadîth should be used as the basis for analogy (Ibn Jinni 1957 vol. 1, p. 357; Versteegh 1997; al-Tantâwî 1995; Abdejaber 1985).

*kâna awwal-a man ba'aja al-nahw wa madda al-qiyâs*

[al-Hadramî] was the first to open grammar and extend analogy.

The Arab linguists practised analogy for pedagogical objectives. They believed that the analogical method was necessary to use to derive the general rules and principles underlying linguistic behavior that to attempt a full comprehension of the language.

The two main schools in Arabic linguistic studies both adopted aspects of analogy but they disagreed about how much to use analogy. The Basran school, for example, believed that the strict use of analogy is a good way of protecting the language and its recording in an organised manner. Thus, some linguists were very strict in the use of analogy to the extent that they were led to ignore a large amount of pure material spoken by Bedouin Arabs (cf. Sayyid 1968: 164–165).

The Kûfan school was not as strict as the Basran school. They do not reject analogy altogether but they assert that analogy should be a pedagogical tool rather than an obstacle from describing actual language use. It can be seen that the Basran school's orientation was to prescribe and propose rules of how to use language whereas the Kufan school was attempting to describe and produce taxonomic classifications of linguistic data. (cf. Sayyid 1968: 187; al-Makhzûmî 1958: 376–389).

In Arabic linguistic thought the principle of analogy can be based on the concept of *ta'lîl* (causation). That is to say, Arab linguists assume the existence of a '*illah* (cause) between *al-maqîs* and *al-maqîs 'alayh*. In other words, the linguist

must explain why he has had to resort to an analogy between *al-maqīs* and *al-maqīs ‘alayh*. Consider the following examples:

1. *daraba Zayd-un ‘Amr-an*

2. *duriba ‘Amr-un*

In example (2), the direct object is governed in the nominative by analogy with the subject (i.e. the direct object is governed in the nominative because it is performing the role of *musnad ilayh*). This is the *‘illah* (reason) for it being governed in the nominative.

### 2.11.2 Causation

Arab linguists mean, by the term *ta‘lil* (causation), the efforts of linguists to discuss why native speakers of the language have used the language in the way they have. An integral part of the thinking of the early Arab linguists was the belief that each rule must of necessity have a reason. Arab linguists took the philosophy of causation from the early Muslim theologians who depended on the principle of causation to defend their views about certain doctrines of Islam. These also had certain linguistic interests which stemmed from the fact that they had to use linguistic tools to extract their evidences from the Qur’anic text. (cf. Jarrar 1992: 82–108).

Linguistically speaking, causation denotes a reason or cause for the occurrence of a particular linguistic phenomenon. Thus, one may argue that the theory of government, which will be discussed in Chapter Four, is a conception of

*ta'îl* (causation). In general, Arab linguists believed that the pure Arabs knew the reasons for many of the linguistic structures they used. Therefore, Arab linguists saw their role as being restricted to investigating the reasons why the Bedouin Arabs used these sentences in the way they did. In this connection, al-Khalîl Ibn Aḥmad (Quoted in Ḥassân 1982: 177; Amaisreh 1987: 25) stated:

*inna al-'Arab-a nataqat 'alâ sajiyyatihâ wa tibâ'ihâ wa 'arafat  
mawâqî'-a kalâmihâ wa qâma fî 'uqûlihâ 'ilaluh wa in lam yunqal  
dhâlika 'anhâ wa i'talalt-u anâ bimâ 'indî annah-u 'illah limâ  
'alaltuh-u minh-u*

The Arabs spoke [their language] in a natural way. They knew their language and established in their minds its various interpretations; but they did not pass these interpretations down to us. For my part I interpreted what I consider as causes [of the linguistic phenomena].

Ibn Maḍâ' al-Qurṭubî (1988) divides linguistic causes into three types, as follows.

#### 1. PRIMARY CAUSES (*al-'ilal al-uwal*)

What is meant by primary causes is the process of trying to ascertain the primary reasons for adjudging the function of an element in a sentence, as in

*qâma Zayd-un*

Zayd stood up

where the word *Zayd-un* is governed in the nominative because it is a subject (*fâ'il*).

Another example is the argument over the reason why nouns do not take the jussive sign and verbs do not take the genitive case, and the adoption of this as a general rule. The Baṣrans and the Kūfans argued that the reason is that verbs are more semantically loaded than nouns. This type of *'illah* is called *'ilal ta'limiyyah* (pedagogical motives). Ibn Maḍā' shares with the majority of other Arab linguists the view that this type of causation (*al-ta'lim*) serves the purpose of education, which is the driving force behind the initiation of Arabic grammar studies (cf. Ibn Maḍā' 1988: 130).

## 2. SECONDARY CAUSES (*al-'ilal al-thawânî*)

By secondary causes is meant the process of trying to answer questions such as why the words that function as subjects are always governed in the nominative and not governed in the accusative. The answer may be in differentiating the subject from its object. This type of *'illah* is called *'illah qiyâsiyyah* (analogical motive; cf. *ibid.*).

## 3. THE THIRD TYPE OF CAUSES (*al-'ilal al-thawâlith*)

The purpose of these is to go beyond primary and secondary causes to assume that the subject is governed in the nominative because it is less common in the Arabic language than the accusative and, moreover, that the nominative is more difficult to pronounce than the accusative. Conversely, to say this is to assume that the accusative is common in Arabic and that the accusative is easier to pronounce

than the nominative, and hence Arab linguists have associated the easier to pronounce with the common and the difficult to pronounce with the less common. For this kind of causation, sometimes referred to as '*ilal nazariyyah* (hypothetical motives), the linguist continues his analysis until he discovers the cause or causes of grammatical phenomena for example in the structure of the following sentence:

*inna zayd-an qā'im-un*

Indeed Zayd is standing

Three different kinds of causation can be observed namely:

1. The word Zayd is in the accusative case because it is affected by the word *inna* which normally governs its subject thus making it accusative.
2. The word *inna* performs the role of government of the subject since it resembles the verb.
3. Further linguistic inquiries into the issue of *inna* such as the word *inna* taking the perfect or imperfect form or comparing it with other verbs etc. lead us to the third kind of causation which is essentially speculative.

(cf. 4.3.3; Ibn Jinnî 1957 vol. 1, pp. 173–174; Versteegh 1997a: 64; Abdejaber 1985: 228).

This type of *ta'îl* appears in traditional books, especially in the fourth and fifth Islamic centuries. Al-Zajjâî (337/948) wrote a book which he called *al-Îdâh fî 'Ilal al-Nahw* (The Interpretation for the Motives in Grammar), which is a typical example of early linguistic books which explain the theory of causality. In this book al-Zajjâî lists most of the motives of grammatical rules (١٥:١).

Ibn Madâ' rejected the second and third types of causation and considered them as not useful for the study of the language; according to him they complicate the rules of Arabic grammar and make them more difficult.<sup>1</sup> No doubt this was a courageous proposal on the part of Ibn Madâ', which met with strong resistance from other linguists, who believed that the knowledge of the second and third causes is part of God's wisdom in creating the language. In this connection Ibn Madâ' (1988: 130) says:

*wa mimmâ yajib-u an yusqat-a min al-nahw al-'ilal-u al-thawânî wa al-thawâlith wa dhâlika mithl-u su' âl-i al-sâ'il 'an Zayd-in min qawlinâ qâma Zayd-un lima rufi' ? fa-yuqâl-u: li-annah-u fâ'il wa kull-u fâ'il-in marfû', fa-yaqûl: wa lima rufi'a al-fâ'il ? fa al-jawâb an*

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Madâ' also calls for the abolition of made-up examples (cf. Versteegh 1997; Abdejaber 1985; Wolfe 1984).



*yuqâl lah-u: kadhâ nataqat bih-i al-'Arab-u thabata dhâlika bi-al-istiqrâ' min al-kalâm al-mutawâtir*

The second and third causation must be dropped from [Arabic] grammar. For example, if one asks why *Zayd-un* in the example *qâma Zayd-un*, is in the nominative case, the answer given is that it is a subject and every subject is in the nominative. But if one asks why the subject is in the nominative, the answer given in this case will be: "This is how the Arabs have pronounced it and this was attested by previous readings and intensive reading".

Ibn Maḍâ's linguistic views were greatly influenced by the ideas of *al-madhab al-zâhirî*, of which he was a member. Dâ'ûd al-Aṣṣfahânî (27/647) established this sect in Baghdad when he believed that religious rites had become too complicated and that the disagreements that existed between religious scholars over some issues had become so great that there was a need to go back to basic rules (cf. 'Id 1973: 49). The *Zahirites* think that the Qur'ân must be literally interpreted *Zâhir al-naṣ*. They justify their rejection of analogy by stating that if the jurist had to deduce a more general proposition from the individual materials, God would have stated this. They also emphasise that any interpretation must be done by using the Qur'anic words.

Ibn Ḥazm (456/1063) adopted the ideas of this sect and introduced them to Andalusia, where they met acceptance. The followers of *al-madhab al-zâhirî* adhered strictly to the teachings of the Qur'ân and the Sunnah for guidance. They put great effort into studying and thoroughly analysing what was available to

them and they became a well-respected Islamic school. Members of the school looked deeply into the Qur'ânic texts as far as they saw appropriate to extract rules, but they restricted themselves to the apparent literal meaning of texts (cf. 'Id 1973: 51).

To conclude, analogy (*qiyâs*) and causation (*ta'lîl*) are well-based principles in Arabic linguistic studies and cover all levels of linguistic analysis. In using *qiyâs* and *ta'lîl*, Arab linguists were under the influence of juristic thinking. If the Muslim jurists (*fuqahâ*) did not find a direct text in the Qur'ân or the Sunnah (the Prophet's tradition) to solve a particular problem, they resorted to analogy to compare this new issue with an old one. But they have to mention the reason (*'illah*) on which they based their judgment. An example of this is that the Qur'ân prohibits the drinking of certain types of alcohol known to Arabs at that time of the Prophet. But what about the types of alcohol which came to be known after that time? The answer to this question is that the prohibition in this case is made by analogy, whereby scholars can evaluate the new types of alcohol against the old ones. This type of analogy is justified by the fact that each type of alcohol affects certain parts of the human brain and can produce drunkenness.

Juristic analogy has four pillars, as follows:

*maqîs 'alayh* (the known issue)

*maqîs* (the new issue)

*hukm* (judgement)

*'illah* (the cause)

Linguists' understanding of analogy and causation resembles that of Islamic jurisprudence as the following table illustrates (cf. Ibn Jinnî 1957 vol. 1, pp. 48–53; Versteegh 1997b: 97–99; Wolfe 1984: 83).

	<i>maqîs 'alayh</i> (THE KNOWN ISSUE)	<i>maqîs</i> (THE NEW ISSUE)	<i>'illah</i> (THE CAUSE)	<i>ḥukm</i> (JUDGEMENT)
JURIDICAL	alcoholic drinks known to the Arabs	alcoholic drinks known later	drunkenness	prohibition
LINGUISTIC	<i>fâ'il</i> (subject)	<i>nâ'ib fâ'il</i> (pro-agent)	<i>'umdah</i> (indispensable element)	<i>raf'</i> (nominative case)

## CHAPTER THREE

# THE CONCEPT OF THE SENTENCE IN ARABIC GRAMMAR AND RHETORIC

*Kalâm* [lit. speech] is any independent utterance having an informative meaning, or what [Arab] grammarians call *jumal*.

(Ibn Jinnî 1957 vol. 2, p. 17)

### 3.1 Introduction

Each language has its own means of using words to form sentences. For this reason linguists differ in terms of the way in which they describe a sentence according to the language they are using as a model. One of the most comprehensive definitions of a sentence in modern linguistics is that of Crystal (1991: 313):

The largest structural unit in terms of which the grammar of a language is organised.

There are some similarities between this concept and the traditional Arabic concept of the sentence, but there are also certain differences. What the two concepts have in common is that both make the sentence the focus of grammatical studies and both agree that strong connections exist between the various elements forming a single sentence. The sentence in traditional Arabic linguistics was the main subject of analysis from the point of view not only of grammar but also of rhetoric. Thus, the study of the Arabic sentence requires knowledge of various issues related to Arabic grammatical and rhetorical studies. Such is the degree of complexity in the concept of the sentence in classical Arabic writing on the subject that there is a need to examine this material in some detail in order to clarify the issues involved.

Sibawayh did not use the term *jumlah* (sentence) in the same way as later Arab linguists used it. In the period following Sibawayh some scholars used the terms *jumlah* and *kalâm* as synonyms while others did not. Arab linguists who

used the terms interchangeably considered them to have the same meaning without imposing any restrictions on their use. Ibn Jinnî (1957 vol. 1, p. 17), for example, states:

*ammâ al-kalâm-u fa-kull-u lafẓ-in mustaqill-in bi-nafsih-i mufid-in li-ma'nâhu wa huwa alladhî yusammîh al-naḥwiyyûn al-jumal*

*Kalâm* [lit. speech] is any independent utterance having an informative meaning, or what [Arab] grammarians call *jumal*.

Ibn Jinnî also devotes a whole chapter to the differences between *kalâm* (lit. speech) and *qawl* (lit. utterance). He argues that *qawl* is what a person utters whereas *kalâm* implies an informative sentence, as in the following example:

*Zayd-un muntaliq-un*

Zayd is leaving

Subsequent Arab linguists differentiate between the term *jumlah* and the term *kalâm*, but the general belief was that *jumlah* is more inclusive than *kalâm* because *kalâm* implies meaningful sentences (cf. Ibn Hishâm [n. d.] vol. 2, pp.374–385; Ibn Ya'îsh [n. d.], vol. 2, p. 21).

Proponents of this view considered that every structure consisting of a verb and a subject or of a *mubtada'* and a *khavar* (a subject and a predicate) is a *jumlah*, even if it is a dependent part of a sentence. On the other hand, *kalâm*, in this view, is any structure satisfying the condition of being informative (cf. Levin 1981; Levin 1985).

The aim of the definitions given in traditional Arabic linguistics of the terms *jumlaḥ* and *kalām* is to arrive at a clear definition of what contemporary linguistics call the sentence. The condition that the structure should be informative is the common denominator among all the definitions given by Arab linguists. However, Arab linguists never used the term *qawl* to denote a sentence. This term is used to refer to any utterance, whether a sentence, or less or more than a sentence (cf. Ibn Jinnî 1957 vol. 2, p. 17).

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to cast light on the various views of traditional Arab linguists concerning the sentence, its component elements, and the principles on which such an understanding of the sentence may be based. This chapter also describes how traditional Arab linguists understand the basic structure of the Arabic sentence, and how other sentences can be derived from it. It places special emphasis on the syntactic connections between the two indispensable elements on which the simple sentence is based, (i.e. the *musnad* and the *musnad ilayh*), as well as on the connections between these two elements on the one hand, and the additional elements on the other.

### 3.2 Indispensable elements and extra elements

Arabic linguistic theory emphasises that the basic sentence should be made up of two indispensable elements, the *musnad* and the *musnad ilayh*. These two elements are related to each other by strong connections. The basic sentence may be verbal or nominal, the strength of the connection between the *musnad* and the

*musnad ilayh* being equal in both cases, as can be understood from the following statement by Sibawayh (1975 vol. 1, p. 23):<sup>1</sup>

*hâdhâ bâb-u al-musnad wa al-musnad ilayhi wa humâ mâ lâ yughnî wâhid-un minhumâ 'an al-âkhar wa lâ yajid-u al-mutakallim minhu budd-an fa-min dhâlika al-ism al-mubtada' wa al-mabnî 'alayhi wa huwa qawluka 'Abdullah-i akhûka wa hâdhâ akhûka wa mithl-u dhâlika yadhab-u 'Abdullah-i fa-lâ budda li-al-fi'l min al-ism kamâ lam yakun li-al-ism al-awwal budd-un min al-âkhar fî al-ibtidâ'*

This is the section on the *musnad* and the *musnad ilayh*. They are both indispensable to each other and no speaker can escape this fact. These include the subject and what is built on it, as when you say: '*Abdullah-i akhûka*' ('Abdullah is your brother), *hâdhâ akhûka* (That is your brother), and *yadhab-u 'Abdullah-i* (Abdullah goes), where the verb needs a noun and the first noun needs another noun when it comes at the beginning of the sentence.

This statement furnishes evidence that Sibawayh was one of the first Arab linguists to deal with the nature of relations and to place emphasis on the two main components of the sentence. According to Ibn al-Sarrâj, the *musnad* is the

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<sup>1</sup> Some contemporary studies try to prove that the verbal sentence is the basic form of the structure and that the nominal sentence is derived from it. Sibawayh, however, did not say this, and he considers both the verbal and nominal sentence to be basic in their own right. Nevertheless, a number of Kûfans agree with this view of contemporary studies, especially when they argue that the subject may precede its verb (cf. Saad 1982: 8–11; Abdul Raof 1998: 43–63).



predicate of the nominal sentence and the verb of the verbal sentence, whereas the *musnad ilayh* refers to the subject of both the nominal and the verbal sentence. The two components are the two fundamental components of the nominal and verbal sentences (cf. Levin 1981; Weiss 1987; Talmon 1988).

Ibn al-Sarrâj maintains that the subject of a verbal sentence is equivalent to the subject of a nominal sentence because they are both *musnad ilayh*. By the same token, he argues that the verb in a verbal sentence is equivalent to the predicate in the nominal sentence because they are both *musnad*. Consider the following statement (1987 vol. 1, p. 37):

*al-ism-u mâ jâza an yukhbar-a 'anhu nahwa qawlika 'Amr-un  
muntaliq-un wa qâma Bakr-un ... wa al-fi'l-u mâ kâna khabar-an wa  
lâ yajûz-u an yukhbar-a 'anhu, nahwa qawlika akhûka yaqûm-u*

The noun is what is possible to talk about, as when you say, '*Amr-un muntaliq-un* ('Amr is leaving) and *qâma Bakr-un* (Bakr stood up) ... and the verb is whatever is predicated and it is not possible to talk about, as when you say *akhûka yaqûm-u* (Your brother is standing).

This shows that the subject and predicate were generally identified in the early Arabic linguistic theory. After this general agreement the Arabic linguistic theory engages in detail discussion about the proper classification of verbs which qualify to functions as predicates and to distinguish these verbs from those which cannot. From this classification stems the typology of verbs that can be ellipted.

The argument goes that the verbs which do not function as predicates are more likely to be ellipted. (cf. Nahlah 1988, al-Dajnî 1987, Levin 1985).<sup>1</sup>

The subjects and the predicates, which represent the *musnad ilayh* and *musnad* in nominal sentences containing predicative nouns, can be assigned by Arabic linguistic theory to initiate a surface syntactic function without any semantic functions. The *mubtada'* (subject) may not function in the same way as *al-fâ'il* (doer) or *maf'ûl* (patient). The predicate (*khavar*) in this type of sentence is assigned an informational rather than a transitive sense, as in the following example:

*Zayd-un asad-un*

Zayd is a lion

Arabic linguistic theory assigns to the noun *Zayd-un* the role of *mubtada'* in the nominative case form, while the word *asad-un* is invariably the *khavar* (predictive).

Arabic linguistic thinking from the time of Sibawayh is characterised by the recognition of the view that nouns are more important than verbs. The argument revolves around the fact that there can be sentences without verbs but no sentences without nouns. This means that nouns are the fundamental source (*uṣûl*) of language. For example, one can say:

*Zayd-un karîm-un*

Zayd [is] generous

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<sup>1</sup> The issue of ellipsis in Arabic grammatical studies will be dealt with comprehensively in Chapter Five.

but one cannot say

*yaktub-u yal'ab-u*

[he] writes [he] plays.

To compile an informative sentence, a verb needs at least one noun. Arab linguists tried to focus on the meaning of verbs. Ibn al-Sarrâj, for example, classified verbs according to their meanings. He argued that the number of nouns used with a verb is determined by its meaning. This method regards verbs as the key element in any informative sentence because they imply actions and tenses at the same time. Nouns are only used because they are required by the verb and their function is to represent the verb's meaning and not just to satisfy the syntactic functions (cf. 4.3.1 Ibn al-Sarrâj 1987 vol. 1, p. 161).

Arab linguists argue that in the nominal sentence the principle is that the *musnad ilayh* should appear at the beginning of the sentence and be followed by the *musnad* (cf. Sibawayh 1975 vol. 2, p. 126). They insist that the subject of the nominal sentence should be either a definite noun (*ma'rifah*) or a specified indefinite noun (*nakirah mukhassasah*) (cf. Sibawayh 1975 vol. 1, p. 329).

As far as the predicate is concerned, the principle is that it should be an indefinite noun. In the standard case traditional Arab linguists see the nominal sentence as consisting of a definite subject and an indefinite predicate, as in:

*al-tâlib-u + mujtahid-un*  
the student + hard working

The student is working hard

This is evident from Sibawayh's statement (1975 vol. 1, p. 328):

*wa aḥsanuhu idhâ ijtama'a nakirah wa ma'rifah an yubtada'-a bi-al-  
a'raf wa huwa aṣl-u al-kalâm*

It is better, if an indefinite and a definite noun appear together, to begin with the definite; this is the basic principle of sentence composition.

Arab rhetoricians attached more semantic importance than did grammarians to whether the predicate is definite or indefinite. They believed that if the predicate is indefinite, it is a means by which to tell the addressee something which he does not know about the subject, as for example in:

*Zayd-un shujâ'-un*

Zayd is brave

But if the predicate is definite, the aim is to stress a subject already known to the addressee, as the following example shows (cf. Al-Jurjânî 1984: 177; Nahlah 1988, al-Dajnî 1987, Levin 1985):

*Zayd-un al-shujâ'-u*

Zayd is the brave

The nominal sentence might contain more than the *musnad ilayh* and more than the *musnad*. In this case Arab linguists call it a *jumlah kubrâ* (major sentence).

This argument was pioneered by Ibn Hishâm ([n. d.] vol. 2, p. 380) who says:

*al-kubrâ hiya: al-ismiyyah allatî khabaruhâ jumlah, nahw: Zayd-un qâma abûh wa Zayd-un abûhu qâ'im wa al-sughrâ hiya al-mabniyyah 'alâ al-mubtada' k-al-jumlah al-mukhbar bihâ fî al-mithâlayn*

The major sentence is the nominal sentence which has a clausal predicate, like *Zayd-un qâma abûhu* (Zayd's father stood up) and *Zayd-un abûhu qâ'im* (Zayd's father is standing), while the minor sentence is the one built on the subject of a nominal sentence (e.g. the predicate sentences in the two above examples).

This type of sentence begins with a noun functioning as a subject followed by a minor sentence *jumlah sughrâ* playing the role of the predicate as the following examples illustrate:

<i>Mubtada'</i>	<i>Khabar</i>	
<i>Mubtada'</i>	<i>Mubtada'</i>	<i>Khabar</i>
<i>Zayd-un</i>	<i>abûhu</i>	<i>karîm-un</i>

It may be noticed that in the above example the minor sentence functioning as a predicate is a nominal sentence. The minor sentence, however, could also be a verbal sentence, as the following example shows:

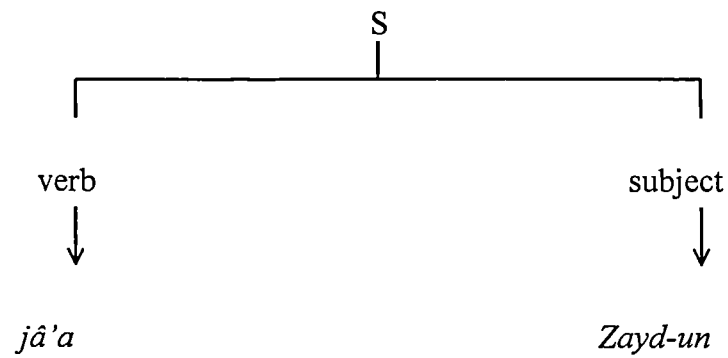
<i>Mubtada'</i>	<i>Khabar</i>
<i>Zayd-un</i>	<i>Yaktub-u al-shi'r-a</i>

Ibn Hishâm ([n. d.] vol. 2, p. 380) emphasises that although examples in which the major sentence begins with a noun represent the grammarians' concept of a major sentence, in actual fact the major sentence could also be a verbal sentence consisting of two verbal clauses, as follows:

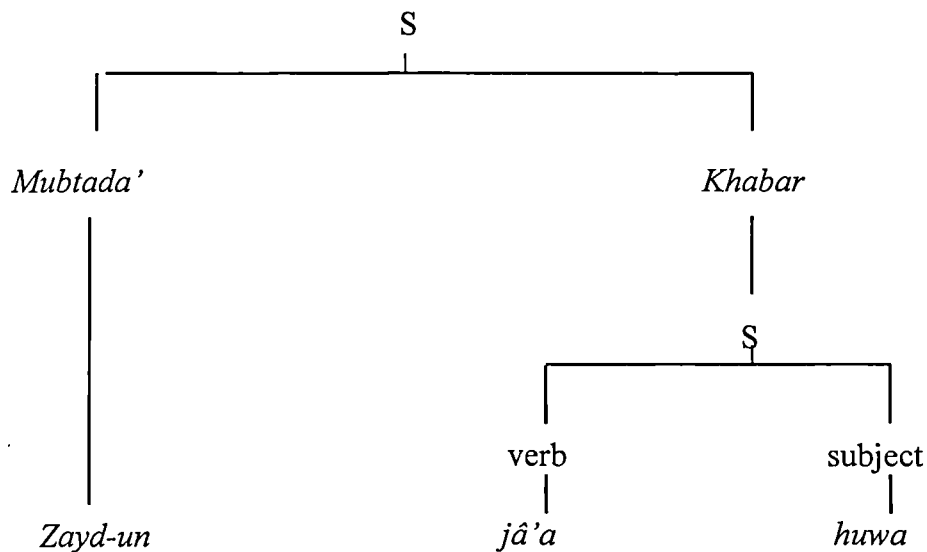
<i>Mubtada'</i>	<i>Khabar</i>
<i>ṣāra Zayd-un</i>	<i>Yaktub al-shi'r</i>

In this example the two minor sentences are interdependent and together they form a major sentence. According to Ibn Hishâm ([n. d.], vol. 2, pp. 381–382), the sentence may be extended to a limited extent, but the number of sentences is unlimited and one can make as many sentences as one wishes (cf. Al-Waer 1983: 16–18).

Arabic rhetorical theory emphasises that via the word order of the indispensable elements the type of the sentence can be changed from a verbal sentence to a nominal and vice versa. This brings major changes to the functions of the elements. This can be illustrated by the following examples:



The purpose of this verbal sentence is informative. It only means that Zayd has come and it does not convey any additional meaning. But, if the subject of the sentence is placed in front, then it becomes as follows:



Thus, the sentence has been transformed into a nominal sentence whose purpose is to attract attention to Zayd and to emphasise that he has come (cf. Ibn al-Athîr 1998 vol. 2, pp. 36–37). Moreover, it now consists, as the diagram shows, of two sentences instead of a single sentence, as it had been before the

changing of the word order of *musnad ilayh*, and *musnad* and this has made it bear a stronger meaning than the first sentence.

The nominal sentence bears the meaning of permanence (*dawâm*) while the verbal sentence bears the meaning of transient (*hudûth*). This can be illustrated by the following examples:

*Zayd-un jawâd-un*  
Zayd is generous

*yajûd-u Zayd-un*

The first sentence is nominal, and bears the meaning of permanence. That is to say, generosity is associated with Zayd and is part of his character.

The second sentence is a verbal sentence which has the meaning of occurrence: that is, Zayd is sometimes generous but being generous is not an essential part of his character. Therefore, if someone wants to describe a person he uses the nominal sentence, as in:

*Zayd-un tawîl-un*

Zayd is tall

Here, the noun *tawîl-un* is used to inform others how tall Zayd is, because this a permanent characteristic associated with Zayd, and in this case one cannot say:

*Zayd-un yaṭûl-u*

Zayd-un is getting taller

But, if one wants to describe a tree, for example, one may do this by using the verbal sentence, as in:



*al-shajarat-u tatûl-u*

The tree is getting taller

Here, the verb is used to describe the tallness of the tree, because the height of the tree is continuously changing and not permanent.

Consider the Qur'ânic verse:

*wa taḥsabuhum ayqâz-an wa hum ruqûd wa nuqallibuhum dhat al-yamîn wa dhat al-shimâl wa kalbuhum bâsiṭ-un dhirâ'ayh bi-al-wasid*

And thou mightest have deemed them awake, though they were sleeping: and we turned them to the right and to the left. And in the entry their dog with paws outstretched.

This verse describes the condition of the inmates of the cave and the state they were in when they were discovered. They were more dead than alive and their dog was frozen, with its paws outstretched, and for this reason the nominal sentence was used to describe the state of the dog:

*wa kalbuhum bâsiṭ-un*

If the verbal sentence had been used instead of the nominal sentence, i.e.

*wa kalbuhum yabsuṭ-u*

the meaning would have been reversed (i.e. the dog was nearer to being alive than to being dead), but this was not the required meaning.

Arab linguists divide sentences into two main components; the musnad and the musnad ilayh. Any element in the sentence which is neither a *musnad*

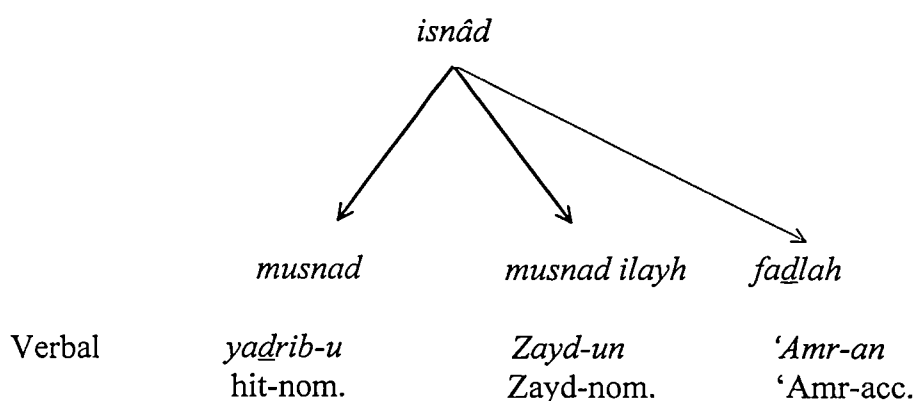
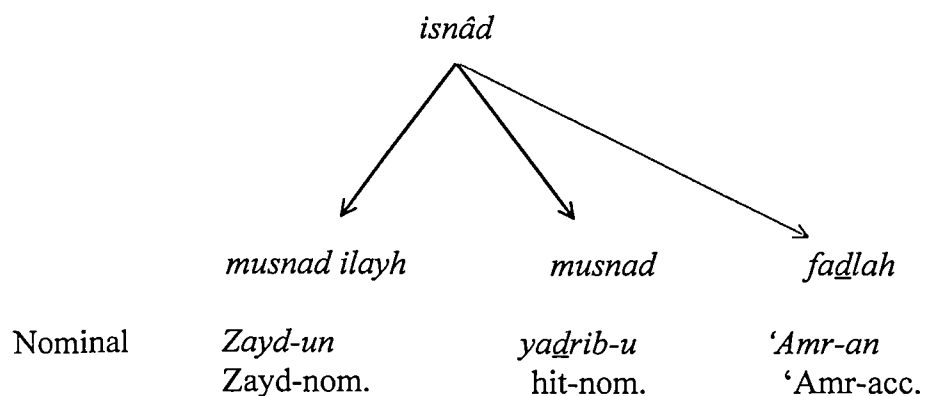
*ilayh* or *musnad* is regarded as a *faḍlah* (extra element). The term *faḍlah* is used to refer to a number of accusative constructions that occur in an utterance in addition to the *musnad ilayh* and *musnad*. (cf. Ibn al-Sarrāj 1987 vol. 1, p. 159–172; al-Waer 1983: 26).

As far as the treatment of *faḍlah* in the Arabic linguistic thinking is concerned we can identify a pattern of thought which generally treats all the accusative constructions in the sentence as extra or optional elements. However, within these accusative constructions we can see that the object is treated differently. This is to say that among all the accusative constructions the object is regarded necessary in sentence structure. This is because the object is necessarily required by transitive verbs (*mut‘addī*). (cf. 6.5; Taha 1996: 281).<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from the above that the two most important elements in Arabic sentence construction are the *musnad* and the *musnad ilayh*. Therefore, the connections between these two elements are strong. It is possible, also, to add some additional element(s). This can be illustrated diagrammatically as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> The literal meaning of the Arabic term *yata‘addā* is to exceed (Ibn Manzūr 1956 vol. 15, pp. 33–34).



Thus, Arabic linguistic theory regards the sentence as basic if it contains only the two indispensable elements. Although the primary aim of Arab linguists is to determine elements forming the basic sentence, we can deduce from their writing, the concept of a longer sentence and the relations between its elements.

### 3.3 Connections between elements

Arabic sentential theory assumes that parsing signs (*ḥarakât al-i'râb*) represent strong relationships that bind the elements of a sentence together. Explaining the reasons for the presence of these signs helps to understand the relationships

between the elements forming the sentence. This was the reason behind the development of the theory of government (‘*amal*’) (cf. Chapter Four; Pena 1997). However, in addition to explaining the relationship between elements via the parsing signs, Arabic sentential theory explains other syntactical and semantic relationships, and these are discussed below in turn.

### 3.3.1 Connection between indispensable elements

In the verbal sentence, the verb must agree in gender with the subject, as in:

*jâ’a Zayd-un*  
came Zayd-nom.

Zayd has come

*jâ’at Fâtimah*  
came-fem. Faṭimah

Faṭimah has come

Arabic linguistic theory considers the verb and the subject as one linguistic unit, and hence argues that ellipsis of the subject from a verbal sentence is not allowed. If the subject is not explicitly expressed in the apparent structure of the sentence, it must be assumed (cf. Ibn Hishâm [n. d.], vol. 2, p. 609; Levin 1985: 121), as the following example shows:

*kataba*  
wrote

The word *kataba* is a *musnad* and it must have a *musnad ilayh*, which is the subject. Hence the assumed structure of the sentence is:

<i>musnad</i>	<i>musnad ilayh</i>
<i>kataba</i>	<i>Huwa</i>

*kutiba*

[it] was written

The word *kutiba* is a verb in the passive voice, which needs a *nâ'ib fâ'il* (vice-subject). The assumed structure of the sentence is therefore:

<i>musnad</i>	<i>musnad ilayh</i>
<i>kutiba</i>	<i>Huwa</i>

In the basic nominal sentence there must be agreement between the *mubtada'* and the *khavar* in terms of singularity, duality or plurality, as the following examples illustrate:

*al-tâlib-u mujtahid-un*

The student is working hard

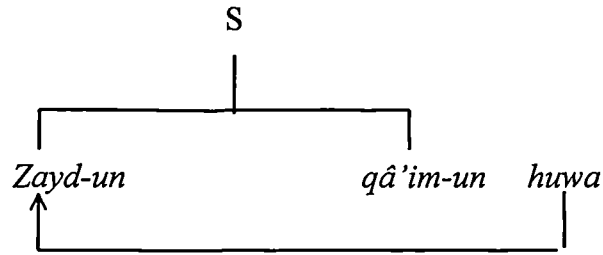
*al-tâlib-ân mujtahid-ân*

The two students are working hard

*al-tullâb-u mujtahid-ûn*

The students are working hard

Also, a pronoun must be assumed after the *khavar* to explain the *mubtada'* and to bind these two essential elements in the sentence together (cf. Abd al-Latîf 1996: 82–88), as in the example:



Both the Baṣrans and the Kûfans agree on the assumption of this element, but the Kûfans add that it must always be assumed in sentences consisting of a *mubtada'* and a *khavar*. The Baṣrans, on the other hand, argue that it should only be assumed if the *khavar* is derived from a verb, and as the verb always needs an assumed subject, so is the noun derived from the verb (cf. al-Anbârî 1945: 43–44). An example of this is:

*Zayd-un qâ'im-un*

Zayd is standing

The Baṣrans also add that this pronoun must be assumed if the *khavar* is a noun not derived from a verb but whose meaning may be interpreted by another noun derived from a verb as in:

*Zayd-un asad-un*

Zayd is a lion.

Here, the word *asad* is a noun that is not derived from verb, and means *shujâ'* (brave), but the word *shujâ'* is derived from the verb *shaja'a* (cf. *ibid.*).

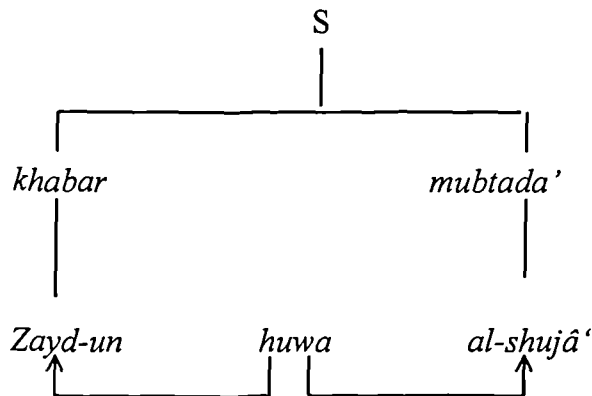
A basic nominal sentence consisting of a *mubtadâ* (subject of a nominal sentence) and a *khavar* (predicate) may also contain an explicit pronoun before

the *khavar* to explain the *mubtada'* if the absence of this pronoun leads to confusion, as in the following example:

*Zayd-un al-shujâ'-u*

Zayd [is] the brave

Here, the word *al-shujâ'-u* could be interpreted as a *khavar* or a *sifah* (an adjective) describing *Zayd-un*. In this case, the pronoun *huwa* (he) will make it clear that the word *al-shujâ'-u* is a *khavar* and not an adjective; this provides a connection between the *mubtada'* and the *khavar* (cf. Sibawayh 1975 vol. 2, p. 390; Amaireh 1989: 71–76).



### 3.3.2 Connection between indispensable elements and extra elements

The basic elements of the Arabic sentence, as it has been explained above, are the *musnad* (attribute) and the *musnad ilayh* (correlate of the attribute). The other elements, according to Arabic linguistic theory, are redundant (*fadlah*). While the theory of government explains the connection between these redundant elements and the elements of attribution through the use of the parsing signs, there are other

connections in the case of redundant elements. For instance, we sometimes find that a number of the *faḍlah* (extra elements) in a sentence perform a different function, but nevertheless they are all governed in the accusative, as in the following example:

*ḍaraba Zayd-un 'Amr-an ḍarb-an shadīd-an yawma al-jumu'ah  
amâma al-masjid ta'dīb-an lahu*

Zayd hit 'Amr hard on Friday in front of the mosque to discipline him

The words *'Amr-an*, *ḍarb-an*, *shadīd-an*, *yawma* and *amâma* are all governed in the accusative even though they perform different functions in the sentence (cf. Amaireh 1987: 100–101). For this reason Arabic linguistic theory assumes that the connection between the verb and the direct object is not the accusative case as such, but the semantic implications.

Similarly, the accusative by itself is not enough to connect the *al-maf'ûl al-muṭlaq* (unrestricted object) to its verb. In this case, the connection is provided by the fact that the unrestricted object is derived from the same root from which the verb is derived.

Moreover, the accusative adverbs of time and of place are linked to the verb by a semantic connection, in that the action indicated by the verb lies in this adverb. Hence, grammarians insist that if the noun is to become suited for an adverbial situation *zarf makân*, it must embody the meaning of the particle *fî* (in), as in:

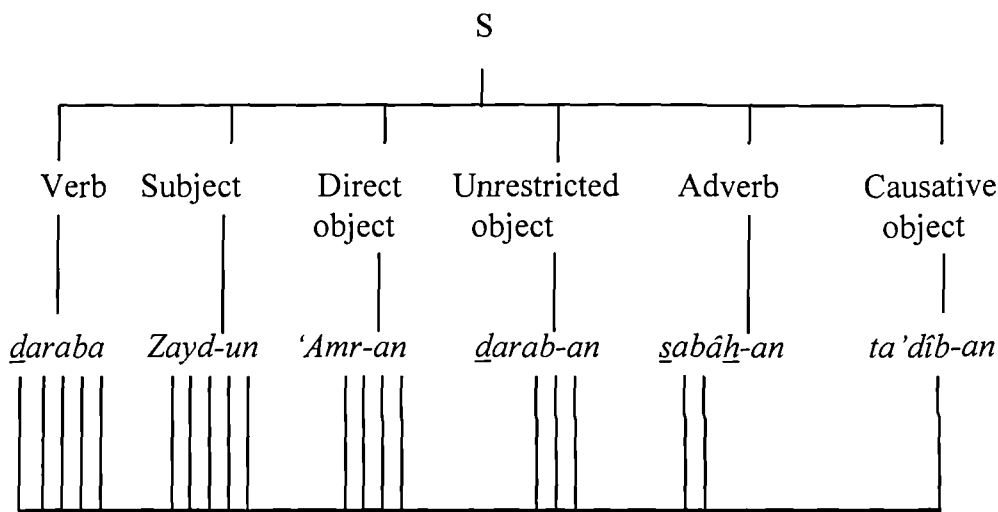
*ḍaraba Zayd-un 'Amr-an yawma al-jumu'ah*

Zayd hit 'Amr on Friday

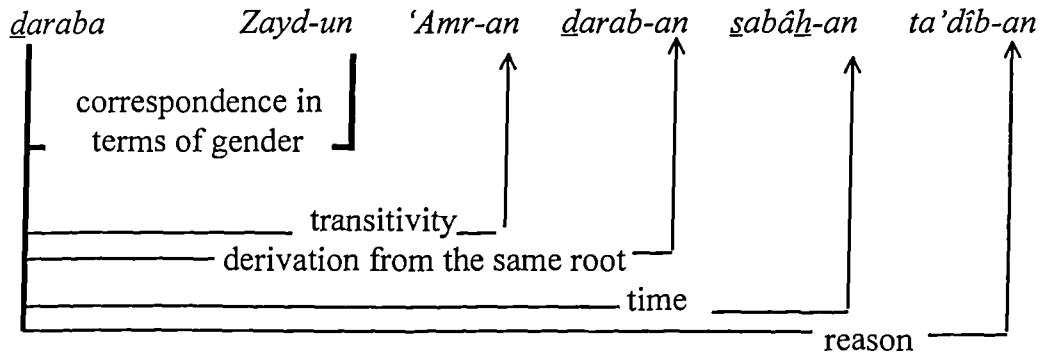


On the other hand, in addition to the accusative, the causative object is linked to the verb by the fact that it explains why the verb is there. Thus, the basic link in the Arabic sentence is between the two basic elements *musnad ilayh* and *musnad* (the attribute and the correlate of the attribute), and for this reason Arab linguists call them *'umdah* (essential).

The extra elements (*fadlah*) are connected to the basic elements by explicit parsing signs and semantic connections (cf. Amaireh 1987: 101). The strength of these connections is shown below.



(cf. Abd al-Latîf 1996: Chapter 2; al-Waer 1985: Chapter 1).



As far as the *hâl* (accusative of circumstance) is concerned, it is semantically connected to one of the essential elements in the sentence, and this is what Arabic linguistic theory calls the *ṣāhib al-hâl* (co-referent of the circumstance). The element functioning as *hâl* is governed in the accusative, but this by itself is not enough to connect the *hâl* to its subject. Accordingly, Arabic linguistic theory assumes a pronoun after the *hâl* referring to *ṣāhib al-hâl* (the co-referent of the circumstance) (cf. Addeweesh 1985: 27–28), as in:

*jâ' a Zayd-un rākib-an huwa*

Zayd came riding

In addition to being governed in the accusative, *tamyîz* (specification) is semantically connected to the other elements in the sentence. Arabic linguistic theory assumes semantic connections between the *tamyîz* (specification) and the main verb in the sentence, as the following example illustrates:

*tâba Zayd-un nafs-an*

Zayd felt happy

The word *nafs-an* in this example is functioning as a word of specification in the sentence, and for this reason it must be governed in the accusative and must be semantically linked with the verb *tāba*. In other words, it aims to explain that what became happy in Zayd was his soul and not anything else (cf. Ibn al-Sarrāj 1987 vol. 1, pp. 222–261; Abd al-Latif 1996: 153).

### 3.4 The assumed structure of the sentence

The concepts of *aṣl* (origin) and *farʿ* (branch)<sup>1</sup> are deeply rooted in Arabic linguistic thought, and they become even clearer in the case of sentence analysis. Arabic sentential theory is based on the assumption that there are two levels of sentence structure: an apparent structure (*ẓāhir*) and an assumed one (*muqaddar*) (cf. Ibn al-Sarrāj 1987 vol. 1, p. 36; Baalbaki 1988: 163; Versteegh, 1994: 276).

Arab grammarians have analysed most sentences by assuming an underlying structure principle to account for the apparent one. One can argue that parts of their discussion can be easily understood in terms of modern schools of structural analysis. However, we find that they sometimes went very far in their assumption (*taqdīr*), since they imposed too many elements in the assumed

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<sup>1</sup> The literal meaning of the word *aṣl* is “root”. *istaʿsalat hādhihi al-shajarah* (This tree has become [well] rooted) implies that its root has become firmly established in the soil (Ibn Manẓūr 1956 vol. 11, p. 16). Conversely, the literal meaning of the word *farʿ* (branch) is the highest point of every thing. *farʿ-u al-shajarah* (the branch of the tree) is the highest point on it (Ibn Manẓūr 1956 vol. 8, p. 246).

structure. Analysis of the following examples illustrates the Arab grammarians' belief in the assumed structure of the sentence:

EXAMPLE 1

*Zayd-un kataba risâlat-an*

Zayd-nom. wrote a letter

Zayd wrote a letter

Arab linguists treat this sentence as having the assumed structure

*Zayd-un kataba huwa risâlat-an.*

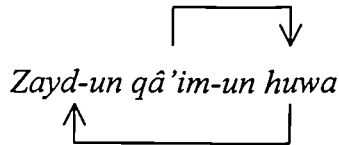
It is argued by Arab grammarians that an implicit pronoun *huwa* (he) must be assumed after the verb *kataba*. The theory of government ('amal) says that every verb must govern a subject and that this governed subject must follow its governing verb. Therefore, the above assumed structure is suggested to comply with the principles of the Arabic theory of government. (cf. Ibn Jinnî 1979: 155–116, Ibrâhim 1975; Hammudah 1983: 198; Abdeljaber 1985: 190).

## EXAMPLE 2

*Zayd-un qâ'im-un*  
 Zayd-nom. standing-nom.

Zayd is standing up

Arab linguists argue that in this sentence a pronoun must be assumed after the word *qâ'im*, and the full structure of the sentence should be



because they argue that the word *qâ'im-un* is a verbal noun (*masdar*) derived from the verb *qâma* and must govern a noun to function as a *fâ'il* as verbs do (cf. Ibn al-Sarrâj 1987 vol. 1, p. 122).

## EXAMPLE 3

*ḍarbî Zayd-an qâ'im-an*  
 hitting-my Zayd-acc. standing-acc.

I hit Zayd when he is standing

This sentence begins with a noun, and according to Arabic linguistic theory it must be treated as a nominal sentence even though it does not contain any element suitable to become a predicate (*khavar*). Arab linguists have put forward many views concerning the probable assumed structure of such a sentence. For example, some linguists have argued that there is no need to assume a predicate in

this case because the infinitive noun (i.e. the word *darbî*) is supplying the place of the verb and *-î* is functioning as a subject. Hence there is no need to assume a predicate because the assumed sentence is a verbal sentence, as follows (cf. Abd al-Latif: 1990: 79–81):

*darabtu Zayd-an qâ'im-an*  
hit I Zayd-acc. standing

Others argue that the infinitive *darbî* is the subject of an ellipted verb and that the assumed structure is the following verbal sentence:

*yaqa' -u darbî Zayd-an qâ'im-an*  
happen-nom. Zayd-acc. standing

However, most Arab linguists argue that since the apparent sentence is a nominal sentence, the assumed sentence must also be a nominal sentence, and hence an ellipted predicate must be assumed in this case. Accordingly, the assumed structure of the sentence should be as follows (cf. *ibid.*):

*darbî Zayd-an idhâ kâna qâ'im-an*  
hitting I Zayd-acc. when standing-acc.

#### EXAMPLE 4

*'Amr-an daraba Zayd-un*  
'Amr-acc. hit-acc. Zayd-nom.

Zayd hit 'Amr

Here, the sentence begins with a noun not capable of functioning as a *mubtada'* because it is in the accusative case. To solve this problem, Arabic linguistic theory assumes an ellipted verb, which would make the sentence read

*daraba 'Amr-an Zayd-un*

where the placing of the direct object at the front is merely a way of drawing attention to it.

The above examples show that an underlying sentence-model is assumed. The term *aṣl al-tarkīb* (the assumed structure) is the general term used for any underlying sentence-model. The principle is to mention the two pillars of the basic sentence, *musnad ilayh* and *musnad*. In this connection, Sibawayh (vol. 1 pp. 24–25) considers non-ellipsis as *aṣl* (origin) and ellipsis as *far'* (branch), when he writes:

*i'lam annahum rubba-mâ yaḥdhifûna al-kalimah wa in kâna aṣluhu fi  
al-kalâm ghayra dhâlik wa yaḥdhifûna wa yu'awwidûn*

Know that they [the Arabs] ellipt the word even if the principle is not like that, and they ellipt and substitute.

The term *taqdîr* indicates the effort of linguists to reconstruct the underlying model of the sentence, particularly where there are issues of ellipsis and word order (cf. Versteegh 1994). Most of the issues relating to the process of ellipsis will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

As far as word order is concerned, the principle is to keep the original assumed word order in the sentence (i.e. the *mubtada'* must come before the *khavar* and the verb before the subject). If the word order is changed, this must be done to satisfy a semantic purpose. From this principle a number of subordinate structures can be made. This is perhaps what Sibawayh (1975 vol. 1, p. 34) meant by his statement:

*fa-in qaddamta al-maf'ûl-a wa akkharta al-fâ'il-a jarâ al-lafẓ-u kamâ jarâ fî al-awwal wa dhâlika qawluk: daraba Zayd-an 'Abdullah li annaka innamâ aradta bih-i mu'akkhar-an mâ aradta bih-i muqaddam-an wa lam turid an tushghil-a al-fî'l-a bi-awwal minhu wa in kâna mu'akkhar-an fî al-lafẓ... ... ka-'annahum innamâ yuqaddimûna alladhî bayânuh ahamm lahum wa hum bi-bayânih a'nâ*

If you place the direct object in front and the subject behind, the utterance [of the parsing signs] will be the same as before, as when you say *daraba Zayd-an 'Abdullah* (Abdullah hit Zayd), because what you wanted to express by placing the direct object behind is also achieved by putting the direct object in front ... even though they [the Bedouin Arabs] put in front what is important and what they are more concerned with.

<i>asl</i> (ORIGIN)	EXAMPLE	<i>far'</i> (BRANCH)	EXAMPLE
Non-ellipsis	<i>idrib Zayd-an</i>	Ellipsis	<i>... Zayd-an</i>
Canonical WO	<i>Zayd-un fî al-dâr</i>	non-canonical WO	<i>fî al-dâr Zayd-un</i>



(cf. al-Jurjânî 1984: 106–172; Ibn al-Athîr 1998 vol. 2, pp. 58–92).

In the context of the early grammarians' interest in parsing signs one notices that their interest in word order in the Arabic sentence was driven mainly by the belief that parsing signs represents the first aid in understanding the function of each word in the sentence. In the following verbal sentence, for example,

*ḍaraba Zayd-un 'Amr-an*  
hit Zayd-nom. Amr-acc.

Zayd hit 'Amr

the word *Zayd-un* functions as a subject while the word *'Amr-an* functions as a direct object, irrespective of the way in which the words are ordered in the sentence. This freedom in ordering words in the sentence cannot be achieved unless the parsing signs are clearly marked at the end of each word, as in the above example. However, if this is impossible, as in

*ḍaraba Mûsâ 'Isâ*  
hit Mûsâ 'Isâ,

it is difficult to say which word functions as the subject and which as the direct object. This is because both *Mûsâ* and *'Isâ* are indeclinable. To solve this problem Arabic linguistic theory resorts to the basic principle that the original word order in every verbal sentence must be as follows:

verb + subject + direct object

Accordingly, the word *Mûsâ* in this case must be the subject and the word *'Isâ* must be the direct object (cf. Ibn 'Aqîl 175 vol. 1, p. 81; al-Sahli 1996: 133–135).

Nevertheless, this basic rule can be transgressed if there is a suitable indicator to

help identify the subject and the direct object, as the following example shows:

*ishtarâ Mûsâ kumithrâ*  
bought Mûsâ pear

Mûsâ bought a pear

In this example, although the words forming the sentence are void of any parsing signs, there is a clear relationship between the word *Mûsâ* and *kumithrâ*, which indicates that the word *Mûsâ* must be the subject and the word *kumithrâ* must be the direct object. Using this reasoning, therefore, the words can be reordered to form the following sentence:

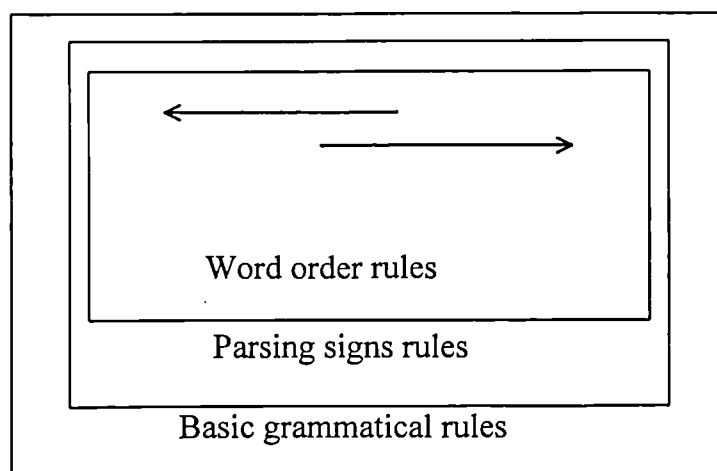
*ishtarâ kumithrâ Mûsâ*  
Bought a pear Mûsâ

This illustrates, therefore, that Arabic linguistic theory initially looks at word order from a purely syntactic point of view, dealing with the relationships between words in the sentence through the parsing signs.

One can conclude that Arabic linguistic theory emphasises that the processes of word order take place only within the context of basic grammatical rules that specify the assumed structure of the sentence. Parsing rules cannot be avoided, but the reordering of words can take place within the framework of all these rules in a way that allows the meaning to change, as the following diagram shows.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Muslim jurists also argue a great deal about the term *asl* and *far'*. In doing this it appears that they wanted to lay down first some general rules and later exclude from them more comprehensive sub-rules. They call the principle knowledge of the Islamic



### 3.5 The rhetorical approach to sentence analysis

In general, Arab rhetoricians agree with grammarians regarding the concept of the sentence as explained above. They also agree about the definition and classification of the main elements into *musnad* (attribute), *musnad ilayh* (correlative of attribute) and *fadlah* (extra element). However, their concern with the overall meaning of the sentence has forced them to adopt their own scheme of sentence analysis. In other words, grammarians have concentrated on the functions of the individual words in the sentence whereas rhetoricians have concentrated on the overall meaning of the sentence (cf. Chapter Six) as well as with the impact the sentence has on the addressee. This has forced Arab rhetoricians to adopt their own classification of the Arabic sentence. Rhetoricians

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jurisprudence *Uṣūl fī al-Fiqh* (cf. 2.11; Ibn al-Sarrāj 1987 vol. 1, p. 36; Versteegh 1977: 90).

classify the Arabic sentence into two main types: (i) *khbariyah* (informative), and (ii) *inshā'iyah* (performative).

By the term *khbariyah*, Arab rhetoricians mean those sentences that can be true or false. An example of this is:

*Zayd-un karīm-un*

Zayd is generous

where the truth of the claim that Zayd is generous relates to the honesty of the person passing the judgement. It is this judgement which has led to the process of attribution between the two main elements of the sentence, the *musnad* (attribute) and the *musnad ilayh* (correlative of the attribute) (cf. Ali 1988: 19; Amîn 1990: 55).

The purpose of the process of attribution in the informative sentence is to inform the addressee of something of which he was ignorant. Arab rhetoricians classify such sentences into three types, depending on the state of mind of the speaker regarding the attitude of the addressee. If the addressee knows nothing about the information contained in the sentence, a particular type of informative sentence is used. This type of sentence is devoid of any strengthening particles (*adawât tawkîd*) because the speaker does not expect from the addressee any rejection of or objection to what he says, but that the addressee will readily accept the information being imparted to him. This type of informative sentence is called *ibtidā'iyah* (basic) and represents the beginning of communication between the speaker and the addressee (cf. Atîq 1985: 52; Amîn 1990: 56; al-Hawwârî 1995: 85).

In cases where some prior communication has already taken place between the speaker and the addressee, which allows the speaker to know the state of mind of the addressee, another type of informative sentence is used. One example of this type of sentence is when the speaker thinks that the addressee is likely to be to some extent dubious about the information to be imparted. The speaker in this case must use an informative sentence that includes some means of corroboration. The role of the speaker or writer in this case is to relieve the recipient from the state of hesitancy to the state of belief (cf. al-Jundî [n. d.] p. 27) as in:

*inna Zayd-an karîm-un*

Indeed Zayd is generous

Finally, if the speaker believes that the addressee will totally reject the information provided in the sentence, he must use sentences that include more than one particle of corroboration, such as:

*inna Zayd-an la karîm-un*

It is clear that in this third case a strong degree of understanding exists between the speaker and the addressee. In other words, the speaker knows the addressee's status very well and it is this that leads him to use more particles of corroboration (Khafâjî 1980: 127; Bohas *et al.* 1990: 128–130).

The performative sentence (*inshâ'iyyah*) on the other hand, is a sentence in respect of which no judgement can be made as to whether the speaker is telling the truth or not. It does not convey any new information to the addressee. This

type of sentence is spoken without there being any reality outside the sentence that corresponds with it. The purpose of the attribution between the main elements in this type of sentence is to carry a meaning that serves the speaker himself.

The performative sentence is of two basic kinds. The first of these is called *inshâ'iyyah talabiyyah* (requiring performative). This type of sentence demands the performing of something that had not been performed when the sentence was composed. (cf. 'Abbas 1989: 147; al-Malik 1995: 70). The second type is called *inshâ'iyyah ghayr talabiyyah* (non-requiring performative), and does not serve such a purpose.

The main sub-types of the requiring performative sentence are: the order (*amr*), prohibition (*nahy*), expression of a wish (*tamannî*) and the vocative sentence (*nidâ'*). The main sub-types of the non-requiring performative sentence are: the oath *qasam*, praising and blaming (*al-madh wa al-dhamm*) and the contractual sentence (*ṣiyagh al-'uqūd*). For all of these sub-types, rhetoricians give a definition of the primary meaning and then explain all the possible secondary meanings (cf. Amîn 1990: 81; Bohas *et al.* 1990: 130–131). Here are two examples.

#### EXAMPLE 1

*hal Zayd-un karîm-un*

Is Zayd generous?

Rhetoricians assume that the primary aim of this type of sentence is to gain knowledge about something about which the speaker knows nothing. However, the interrogative sentence may sometimes have other secondary rhetorical meanings which are different from the primary meaning. It may, for example, imply negation (*naḥy*) as in:

*hal yufid al-nawm*

Is sleeping useful

or it may imply affirmation (*ithbāt*) as in:

*man alladhī lā yuḥibb-u al-māl?*

Who doesn't like money?

Alternatively it may imply an offering (*'ard*), as in

*hal turīd-u shāy-an am qahwah?*

Do you want tea or coffee?

#### EXAMPLE 2

*wa Allah-i kharaja Zayd-un*

I swear by God that Zayd has gone out

Here, the oath sentence assumes both that the addressee is in a state of that he belongs to the same culture as that of the speaker, because it assumes that the addressee believes in the subject of the oath. Moreover, in composing the oath sentence, the speaker must intend to strengthen the sentence by the oath. Both the speaker and the addressee must share a belief in the subject of the oath, and thus

the meaning of the sentence becomes stronger and the message embodied in it more affirmative.

In the rhetoricians' classification of the Arabic sentence we can clearly see their firm belief that the connection between the elements in the sentence is the key factor determining the meaning that the speaker or writer wants to convey. Hence, the main task of the speaker is to attribute skillfully the elements of the sentence to each other in a manner that suits the situation of the addressee. In an Arab rhetoricians' own words (cf. Hatim 1990: 48; Abd al-Muttalib 1994: 5–6; 'Atîq 1985: 11; al-Mûsâ: 1987: 96):

*yajib-u 'alayhi an yurâ 'î muqtadâ al-hâl*

He or she should observe the particular circumstances of the given situation

The concept *nazm* (construction) shows that Arab rhetoricians were aware of the connectivity between parts of the sentence. This is very clearly stated in al-Jurjânî's statement (1984: 55):

*lâ nazma fî al-kalim-i wa lâ tartîb hattâ yu'allaq-u ba'duhâ bi ba'd  
wa yubnâ ba'duhâ 'alâ ba'd wa tuj'al hâdhihi bisabab-in min tilk*

There is no *nazm* (construction) and no *tartîb* (organisation) [among sentence components] unless they are tied together and built on, and unless you make one depend on the other.



Arab rhetoricians devoted a branch of their subject to the study and classification of sentences from the point of view of eloquence. They called this *'ilm al-ma'ânî* (the science of meaning), which al-Sakkâkî (1937: 77) defined as follows:

*i'lam anna 'ilm al-ma'ânî huwa tatabbu' khawâss tarâkīb al-kalâm fī al-ifâdah wa mâ yattaşil-u bihâ min al-istihsân*

Know that *'ilm al-ma'ânî* is to trace the particular characteristics of the structure of speech, its usefulness and all the advantages that come from it.

The agreement between grammarians and rhetoricians is reflected in the fact that the process of attribution (*isnâd*) takes place between the *musnad ilayh* and *musnad*. The disagreement, however, lies in the way in which the two groups look at the process of attribution; for while grammarians see it as the basis for judging whether the structure is grammatically correct or not, rhetoricians believe that it can take place in many ways, each of which has its own independent meaning and suits a particular situation. Sentences that are considered acceptable in certain circumstances are not necessarily to be considered so in others. Moreover, rhetoricians regard the correctness or incorrectness of the sentence in terms of grammar as a superficial issue, because a grammatically correct sentence will be correct in all situations (cf. Ibn al-Athîr 1998 vol. 1, p. 24; al-Qazwînî [n.d.] p. 7). For rhetoricians the purpose of studying the sentence and its elements

goes beyond grammar to determine the most elegant way of expressing the required meaning and this is probably what al-Sakkâkî meant by the term *istihsân*.

One can argue that Arabic rhetorical theory has given a new dimension to Arabic sentence analysis because rhetoricians have introduced a pragmatic perspective on sentence analysis. Their various views on language in general show that their observations regarding the sentence and its constituents are associated not only with the form but also with the successfulness of the utterance action. They consider language in terms of its informative functions, as is explicitly demonstrated in their discussion of ellipsis (cf. Chapter Six), where they consider pragmatically why speakers omit certain elements that listeners expect in the structure of the sentence. Arab rhetoricians, as al-Jurjânî represents them, look for a more substantial basis for sentence analysis that takes into consideration factors that go beyond the meaning of the individual elements of the sentence. According to al-Jurjânî, the grammatical meaning does not include the parsing signs. This is because the parsing signs do not ascribe any value to eloquence. This is clear from his statement (1984: 395):

*lam yajuz idhâ 'udda al-wujûh al-latî tazhar-u bihâ al-maziyyah an  
yu'add-a fihâ al-i'râb wa dhâlika anna al-'ilma bi al-i'râb mushtarak-  
un bayna al-'arab kullihim wa laysa huwa min mâ yustanbat bi al-fikr*

It is wrong to count parsing signs as one of the aspects that make speech eloquent, because this is common to all Arabs and it cannot be deduced by thinking.

In order to show the significance of ellipsis rhetoricians frequently give examples where an element is ellipted from the structure of the sentence and compare it with a counter-sentence in which the same element is present. It is true that grammarians have studied issues which later became part of Arabic rhetoric, such as ellipsis (*al-hadhf*) and word order (*al-taqdīm wa al-t'akhîr*) but their study of these issues has concentrated primarily on purely grammatical correctness. For example, grammarians have studied when ellipsis should and should not be practised. Rhetoricians, on the other hand, have studied matters such as when ellipsis is more expressive of the meaning which the speaker wishes to convey.

Arabic rhetorical theory emphasises the view that the sentence production is a cognitive process which begins in the mind of the speaker or writer, who uses meanings and concepts rather than words in his thinking. Once these meanings developed in his mind, there is no necessity for making further effort to think of words that convey these meanings, because the words are the followers of meaning. Once the meanings are constructed in the mind as thought, the words can be easily arranged to express this thought.

## CHAPTER FOUR

THE THEORY OF GOVERNMENT (*'amal*)

This is a chapter on the conditions regarding inflections of the end of words in the Arabic language. There are eight inflections [i.e. endings]: *al-naṣb*, *al-jarr*, *al-raḥ'*, *al-jazm*, *al-fath*, *al-damm*, *al-kasr*, and *al-waqf*. These eight forms are in fact four, because *al-naṣb* and *al-fath* are the same thing, and *al-jarr* and *al-kasr* are the same thing, and *al-raḥ'* and *al-damm* are the same thing and *al-jazm* and *al-waqf* are the same thing. However, I have given you the eight terms so as to differentiate between [mood and case] endings, which are due to the influence of governing elements and those features which are permanent.

Sibawayh (1975 vol. 1, p. 13)

## 4.1 Introduction

Since the theory of government<sup>1</sup> (*'amal*) dominates all Arabic sentential studies, it is appropriate that this study discusses this important theory in detail. The theory of government is typically used to justify parsing signs of Arabic sentential elements. While Arab grammarians do not differ on the main principles of the theory, one can find some disagreement on doing more in-depth study. The theory assumes that parsing signs of a word change according to the change in governing elements. These governing elements may be expressed (*lafẓī*) or abstract (*ma'nawī*). An abstract governor does not consist of words but is a concept that is determined by the linguists to explain the *i'râb* whenever the sentence does not include an explicit or implicit governing element which linguists believe explains it.

The theory of government demands, as a condition for the *athar* (effect), that is the parsing signs which are caused by the influence of the governing words on the governed words, that the elements must together form an informative sentence. In other words, the theory of government does not attach any significance to isolated words, because the *athar* does not appear on them.

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<sup>1</sup> The Arabic term *'amal* has a number of different English translations. Western linguists offer the following alternatives: government, grammatical effect and operation (cf. Levin 1979; Versteegh 1994; Talmon 1993).

Although none of the Arab linguists explicitly recognises a set of basic principles for the notion of *'amal*, one can argue that the origin of the theory lies firmly in Sibawayh's Book. Moreover, the notion of *'amal* has had a major influence on the writings of Arab grammarians throughout the history of Arabic linguistic thought, and still finds great acceptance among contemporary Arab linguists owing to its rational explanation of sentence cohesion.

This chapter discusses the theory's roots, the philosophy behind it and its most important advocates and opponents. It also aims to explore the different aspects of the theory and to explain why it gained widespread acceptance among traditional Arab linguists. This will serve to clarify the views of Arab linguists on sentence analysis, and particularly elliptical sentences because the assumption of ellipted elements by Arab linguists is in most cases based on a deep understanding of this theory.

## 4.2 The roots of the theory in explaining grammatical functions

The theory of government has its roots in philosophy and religious thinking. Arab linguists believe that for everything existing in this world there is a creator and a reason for its creation. As a result of such thinking, Arab linguists have questioned the reasons behind the appearance of the short vowels at the end of the words known as parsing signs (*ḥarakât al-i'râb*; i.e. mood and case endings). For

early Arab linguists, it was inconceivable that any case ending could have existed without an instigator (*mu'aththir*). The fact that words take the nominative, accusative or genitive cases was considered to be something for which there was a reason (cf. 'Id 1989: 199–207; Bohas *et. al.* 1990: 57; Pena 1997).

It is probable that the theory of government is a wholly Arabic conception, invented by Arab linguists during the early history of Arabic linguistics, when linguistic studies were in their infancy. It is likely also that the basic idea of this theory was borrowed by Arab linguists from preceding nations particularly the Greeks, who were famous for their studies of logic (cf. Versteegh 1977; 'Id 1989: 13–24; Carter 1990; Talmon 1993: 278; Fleisch 1994: 179–180).

The theory of government gained support in the early days of Arabic grammar, and is always referred to whenever an effort is made to analyse the Arabic sentence, with only minor differences in presentation. Consider, for example, the following two statements by Sibawayh (1975 vol. 1, p. 13; vol. 2, p. 131):

*hâdhâ bâbu majârî awâkhir-i al-kalim min al-'arabiyyah, wa hiya tajrî 'alâ thamâniyat majâr-in: 'alâ al-nasb wa al-jarr wa al-raf' wa al-jazm, wa al-fath wa al-damm wa al-kasr wa al-waqf, wa hâdhihi al-majârî al-thamâniyah yajma'uhunna fî al-lafz arba'at adrub fa-al-nasb wa al-fath fî al-lafz darb-un wâhid wa al-jarr-a wa al-kasr fîhi darb-un wâhid wa kadhâlika al-raf' wa al-damm wa al-jazm wa al-waqf. wa innamâ dhakart-u laka thamâniyat majâr-in li-ufarriq bayna mâ yadkhuluha darb-un min hâdhihi al-arba'ah limâ yuhdithu fîhi al-'âmil wa laysa shay'-un minhâ ilâ wa huwa yazûl 'anhu wa bayna mâ yubnâ 'alayhi al-harf*

This is a chapter on the conditions regarding inflections of the end of words in the Arabic language. There are eight inflections [i.e. endings]: *al-naṣb*, *al-jarr*, *al-raḥ'*, *al-jazm*, *al-fath*, *al-damm*, *al-kasr*, and *al-waqf*. These eight forms are in fact four, because *al-naṣb* and *al-fath* are the same thing, and *al-jarr* and *al-kasr* are the same thing, and *al-raḥ'* and *al-damm* are the same thing and *al-jazm* and *al-waqf* are the same thing. However, I have given you the eight terms so as to differentiate between [mood and case] endings, which are due to the influence of governing elements and those features which are permanent.

.....

*za'ama al-Khalîl-u annahâ [inna wa akhawâtuhâ], 'amilat 'amalayn al-raḥ' wa al-naṣb*

Al-Khalîl claims that these particles [i.e. *inna* and its sisters] produce two effects: the nominative and the accusative.

The signs for inflections which Sibawayh explains can be represented in tabular form as follows.

ENDINGS OF WORDS	WITH GOVERNOR	WITHOUT GOVERNOR
-a	<i>naṣb</i>	<i>fath</i>
-i	<i>jarr</i>	<i>kasr</i>
-u	<i>raḥ'</i>	<i>damm</i>
-zero	<i>jazm</i>	<i>waqf</i>

Cf. Abdeljaber 1985: 80-86; Sara 1996: 257; Versteegh 1997: 45.



These passages suggest that although Sibawayh does not use the term '*amal*', the theory of government has its roots in the writings of the founding father of Arabic grammar. It appears that Arab grammarians following Sibawayh took this idea from him and developed it further. They regarded it as the most appropriate educational tool for helping students to avoid making grammatical mistakes (cf. Talmon 1993: 279).

The theory of government assumes that the parsing signs that occur at the end of a word are due to its grammatical relation with other words in the sentence. For example, the word *Zayd* can be changed as follows:

Nominative case: *jâ'a Zayd-un*

Zayd came

Accusative case: *inna Zayd-an jâ'a*

Indeed Zayd came

Genitive case: *marart-u bi Zayd-in*

I passed Zayd

The theory of government assumes that words that have parsing signs which changed in accordance with their grammatical function in the sentence are either nouns or imperfect verbs. Nouns are reckoned to be in one of three cases: the nominative (*raf'*), the accusative (*naṣb*) or the genitive (*jarr*); likewise, verbs

have three moods: the indicative (*raf'*), the subjunctive (*naṣb*) or the jussive (*jazm*). The following table shows this.

Nouns	-u	-a	-i
Verbs	-u	-a	-∅

There are, however, some exceptional cases which do not conform with the pattern outlined above. For each primary signs mentioned earlier there is a secondary signs. This can be illustrates as follows.

#### ALTERNATIVES FOR -u

1. The suffixes which occur in the position of -u in nouns in certain grammatical functions can be explained as follows:

- (i) The dual suffix -*ân* as in the sentence:

*jâ'a al-Zaydân*

The two Zayds came

- (ii) The plural' suffix -*ûn*, as in the sentence:

*jâ'a al-Zaydûn*

Those named Zayd came

- (iii) The suffix *û*, as in the sentence:

*jâ' abû Zayd*

Zayd's father came

2. The primary sign for the indicative mood *-u* in verbs can be replaced by secondary signs in certain grammatical functions as can be illustrated as follows:

- (a) The suffix *-ân*, as in the sentence:

*al-ṭālibân yaktubân*

The two students are writing

- (ii) The plural suffix *-în*, as in the sentence:

*al-ṭullâb-u yaktub-în*

The students are writing

- (iii) The feminine singular suffix *-în* as in the sentence:

*ant-i taktub-în*

You are writing

(cf. Versteegh 1997b; Bohas et al 1990; Holes 1995)

ALTERNATIVES FOR *-a*

1. The basic sign for *naṣb* (accusative case) in nouns *-a* can be replaced by the following suffixes in different grammatical functions:

- (i) The suffix *-â*, as in the sentence:

*ra'ayt-u abâ Zayd*

I saw Zayd's father

*ra'ayt-u abâk-a*

I saw your father

- (ii) The suffix *-ayn*, as in the sentence:

*ra'ayt-u al-tâlibayn*

I saw the two students

- (iii) The plural suffix *-în*, as in the sentence:

*ra'ayt-u al-muslimîn*

I saw the Muslims [more than two]

- (iv) The feminine plural suffix *-âti* as in the sentence:

*ra'ayt-u al-muslimâti*

I saw the Muslim ladies.

2. The primary sign for the subjunctive in verbs *-a* can be replaced by the ellipsis of the suffix *-n* that is preceded by one of the following:

- (i) The suffix *-â* as in the sentence:

*al-tâlibân lan yaktubâ*

The two students will not write

- (ii) The plural suffix *-û* as in the sentence:

*al-tullâb-u lan yaktubû*

The students will not write

- (c) The feminine singular suffix *-î* as in the sentence:

*lan taktub-î*

You will not write

#### ALTERNATIVES FOR *-î*

- (i) The suffix *-ayn*, as in the sentence:

*sallamtu 'alâ al-rajulayn*

I greeted the two men

- (ii) The plural suffix *-în*, as in the sentence:

*sallamtu 'alâ al-musâfirîn*

I greeted the travelers

- (iii) The suffix *-î*, as in the sentence:

*dahabt-u ilâ abî Zayd*

I went to Zayd's father

#### ALTERNATIVE FOR *-ø*

The alternative for *al-sukûn* which is the primary sign for *al-jazm* [jussive mood]

is the ellipsis of the element *-n* which follows one of the suffixes below:

- (i) The suffix *-â*, as in the sentence:

*lam yaktubâ*

They [two] did not write

(ii) The plural suffix *-û* as in the sentence:

*lam yaktubû*

They [three or more] did not write

(c) The feminine singular suffix *-î* as in the sentence:

*lam taktubî*

You [feminine] did not write

(cf. Versteegh 1997b; Bohas et al 1990; Holes 1995)

Therefore, the theory of government establishes links between these various parsing signs and the function which words play in the sentence. This connection between the functions of words in the sentence and the parsing signs is inadequate, because there are many examples in the Arabic language which contradict it. Consider the following examples:

1. *Zayd-un karîm-un*

Zayd is generous

2. *inna Zayd-an karîm-un*

Indeed Zayd is generous

3. *kâna Zayd-un karîm-an*

Zayd was generous

In example (1), both the subject (*Zayd-un*) and the predicate (*karîm-un*) are governed in the nominative; while in example (2) the subject (*Zayd-an*) is the noun of *inna* and is governed in the accusative, even though it is still functioning as a subject, and the predicate (*karîm-un*) is governed in the nominative; and in example (3) the subject (*Zayd-un*) is the noun of *kâna* and is governed in the nominative whereas the predicate (*karîm-an*) is the predicate of *kâna* governed in the accusative and still functioning as a predicate.

The association of the functions words perform in the sentence and the parsing signs represents an early stage in the theory of government (cf. Levin 1995: 215). When it was realised that there are too many examples which contradict this general assumption, attempts were made to develop this general principle by classifying the elements in a sentence into governing words (*'awâmil*) and influenced words (*ma'mûlât*). This classification does not reject the association between the functions words play in the sentence and parsing signs. Rather, it elaborates on it. In other words, it represents an explanation of a general principle, as the following example shows:

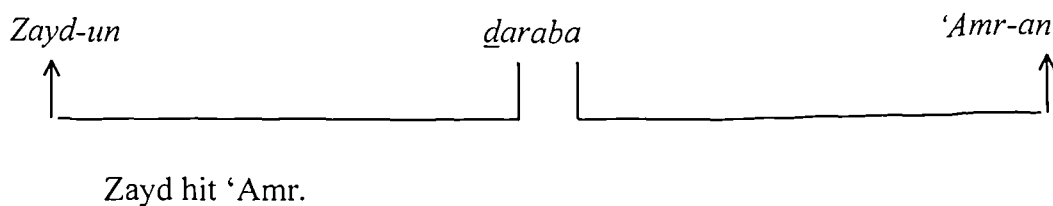
*kataba Zayd-un risâlat-an*

Zayd wrote a letter

In this example the word *Zayd-un* functions as a subject and is governed in the nominative. Thus, every word that functions as a subject is in the nominative, but not every word that is in the nominative is necessarily a subject. On the other hand, the word *risâlat-an* is a direct object, and as such is governed in the accusative. Thus, every word that functions as a direct object must be governed in

the accusative, but not every word that is in the accusative is necessarily a direct object. Thus, saying that the verb *kataba* has produced the nominative in the subject and the accusative in the direct object is regarded as more accurate than saying that the word *Zayd* is governed in the nominative because it is a subject while the word *risālat-an* is governed in the accusative because it is a direct object.

One of the basic rules of the Arabic theory of government says the governed element must follow its governor. However, Arab linguists distinguish between two categories of governing elements. One is called ‘weak governing elements’ and the other is known as ‘strong governing elements’. The chief among the strong governing elements is the verb. Accordingly, the Kufan school chose the position that verbs can govern in both directions, i.e. backward to govern the subject and make it nominative and forward to govern the object and make accusative. (cf. Ibn al-Sarrāj 1987 vol. 1, pp. 72–73). Consider the following example:



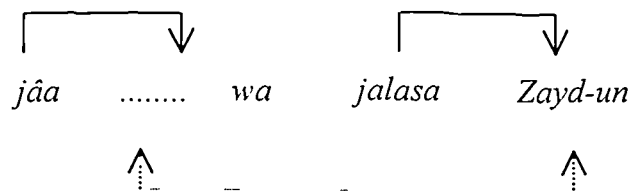
In the above example, the subject is to be governed in the nominative case by an abstract governor according to the Basran view. However, it is governed by expressed governor, i.e. the verb according to the Kufan view (cf. 4.4).



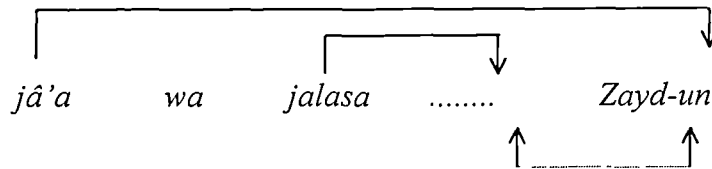
A governing element may govern more than one element. But no two governing elements can influence the same element at the same time. Consider, for instance, the two verbs *jâ'a* and *jalasa* in the following example:



These verbs cannot both govern the subject in the nominative at the same time. Hence, in this case one must choose only one of these two elements and designate it the governor. The Baṣrans believe that the governing element in this case is the second verb because of its proximity to the subject, and that the first verb operates on a deleted pronoun that can be inferred from the mentioned subject *Zayd-un*. The assumed structure in this case will be:

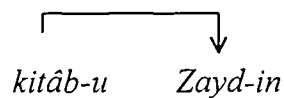


The Kûfans, on the other hand, argue that the governing element in this case is the first verb, and justify this by pointing out that it is present at the start of the sentence. According to this view the assumed structure will be:

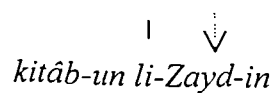


Grammarians agree that the first governing element has only one influence (*athar*) on the influenced element and that it cannot cause more than one element at the same time to be governed in the nominative case (cf. Levin 1995: 220).

In general, governing elements do not govern elements of their own category. For example, verbs do not operate on verbs, particles do not operate on particles and nouns do not operate on nouns except in the case of nouns derived from verbs (cf. 4.3.2). However, some grammarians argue that nouns can operate on nouns, such as in the case of annexation (*idâfah*):



However, this argument can be rejected by simply inferring an ellipted preposition before the word *Zayd-in*, whereon the assumed structure will be (cf. Bohas *et al.* 1990: 58):

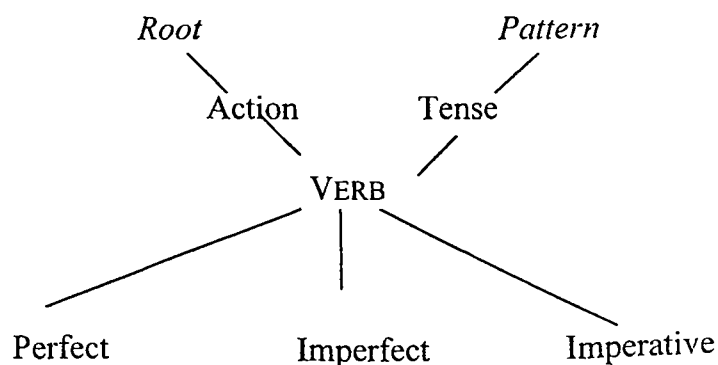


### 4.3 Types of governing words

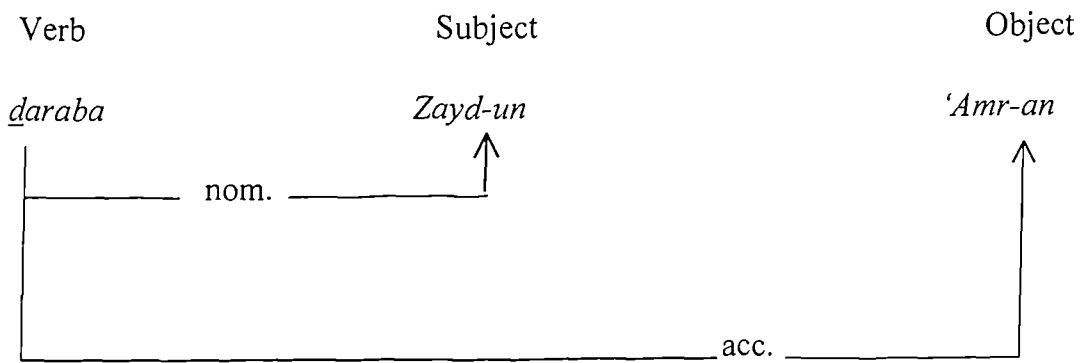
#### 4.3.1 Verbs

One important aspect of the theory of government is the relative importance of nouns and verbs. The theory of government represents a shift away from the idea that nouns are the basic elements in the sentence towards the idea that verbs are the key elements in the sentence. When the Arab grammarians talked about the nouns, they were thinking of the surface structure of the sentence (cf. 3.2). Verbs are regarded as the most powerful governing elements. They influence nouns, since no sentence can have a verb without having a subject. Hence, the verb is the influencing and the subject the influenced element.

The verb is defined as a word that implies an action and tense. The action is derived from the root of the word while the tense is derived from the pattern, as the following diagram shows. The division of the verb into three tenses does not affect its capacity to operate on the other elements in the sentence (cf. Hassân 1958).



Verbs are regarded in the Arabic grammatical theory to be strong governors for the following reasons. First, they can govern nouns in nominative as well as accusative cases. Second, they can govern more than two elements in the sentence as in the case of verbs which govern more than one object. Therefore, they are considered to be the strongest governing elements in the sentence.



Here, the verb *ḍaraba* is the governor for both the subject and the direct object. It causes the subject to be governed in the nominative case and the direct object to be governed in the accusative case (cf. Ibn al-Sarrâj 1987 vol. 1, p. 54; Sibawayh 1975 vol. 1, p. 34; al-Anbârî 1945: 56; Taha 1996: 282–283).


Sibawayh states that some verbs are always used with a preposition, as in the sentence:

*dakhala Zayd-un ilâ al-bayt*

Zayd entered [into] the house

The term expansion (*ittisâ'*) may be used to explain how some verbs like *dakhala* (to enter) can be transitive if they are followed by a particular preposition. The word *al-bayt* in the above sentence can not be considered a normal direct object of the verb but it is engaged in this grammatical function.

The Basrans argue that the verb governs only in the forward direction, i.e. it governs what follows it. Similarly, the Kufans assert that verbs govern mainly elements occurring after them. However, they may sometimes govern elements occurring before them (cf. 4.1). This can be seen clearly in the Kûfans' argument that the sentence:

  
*Zayd-un jâ'a*

Zayd came.

is a verbal sentence. In this sentence the verb governs the subject in the nominative despite the fact that the subject is preceding the verb not following it (cf. al-Anbârî 1945: 140–141).

Another feature of verbs identified by Arab grammarians is that they govern even when they are ellipated. This can be illustrated by the following example:

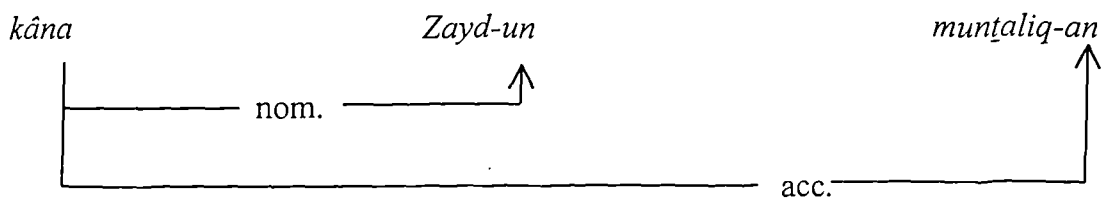
*man jâ'a?*

Who came?

*Zayd-un*

In this example, the subject *Zayd un* is governed by an implicit governing element *ja'a*. (cf. Hasan 1974 vol. 1, p. 507).

Grammarians believe that some verbs may be more influential than others may. For example, defective verbs (*af'âl nâqisah*) such as *kâna* (to be) are weaker than normal transitive verbs because they are regarded as taking *ism kâna* (a noun of *kâna*) as their subject rather than a real subject (*fâ'il*) as the case of other verbs (cf. Itkonen 1991: 140). Defective verbs operate only on the subject and predicate, as in:

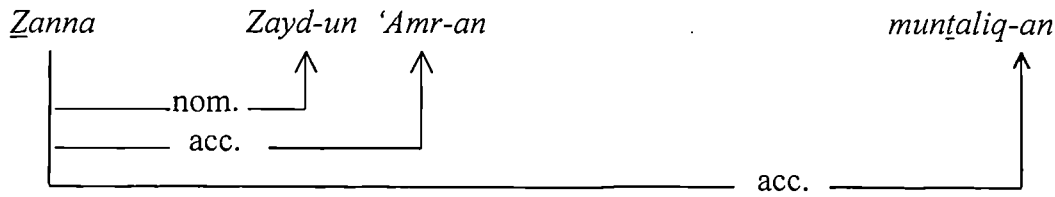


The verb *kâna* cannot be regarded as a transitive verb in the same way as the normal transitive verb *daraba* is considered one. It does not reach the item which is actually its object (cf. Sibawayh 1975 vol. 1, p. 31).<sup>1</sup>

Verbs can influence more than one element to be governed in the accusative case, as in the sentence:

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<sup>1</sup> The discussion here is about what Arab grammarians call *kâna al-nâqisah* that occurs with a subject and predicate. There is other type of *kâna* that takes a subject only and called *kâna al-tâmmah* (cf. Levin 1979).



*Zanna* (to guess) and its sisters govern a their subjects and assigns to them the nominative case and two objects to which they assign an accusative case. What distinguishes these verbs from other transitive verbs is the fact that the relationship between *zanna* and its complements is different from that between normal transitive verbs such as *daraba* and their complements. The relationship between these verbs and their subjects is assumed to be stronger than that between these verbs and their two objects. In the case of *zanna*, if the verb is ellipated the two nouns will form an informative nominal sentence. In this case the two nouns receive the nominative case as, respectively, the subject and predicate of the sentence. Sibawayh (1975 vol. 1, p. 39) referred to this as follows:

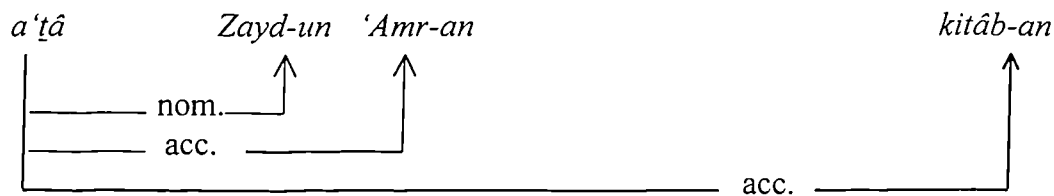
*hâdhâ bâbu al-fâ'ili alladhî yat'addâhu fi'luh-u ilâ maf'ulayn wa laysa laka an taqtasir-a 'alâ ahad-i al-maf'ûlayn dûna al-âkhar wa dhâlika qawluka: hasiba 'Abdullâhi Zayd-an bakr-an wa zanna 'Amr-un khâlid-an abâka*

This chapter deals with transitive verbs which take two objects and it is insufficient to use one of the objects and leave the other as when you say: *hasiba 'Abdullâhi Zayd-an Bakr-an* (Abdullah thought that Zayd was Bakr) and *zanna 'Amr-un khâlid-an abâka* ('Amr thought that Khalid was your father).

When we compare the verb *zanna* with the a normal transitive verb like *daraba*, the verb and the direct object of *daraba* would not have the same relation to one another as have the two objects of *zanna*. (cf. Sibawayh 1975 vol. 1, p. 45; al-Anbârî 1945: 489; Bohas *et al.* 1990: 64–65).

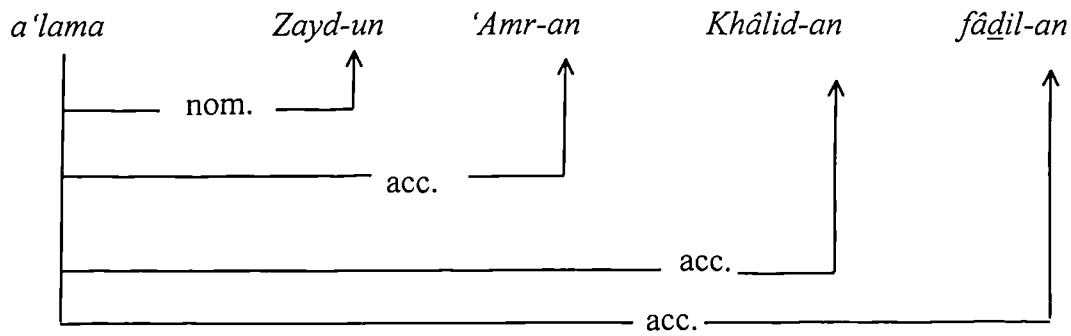
A distinction must be made between those verbs with two objects that need both objects in the sentence, such as *zanna*, and those which can occur with two objects but which can also exist with just one. The basic principle in deciding whether to include one or both objects is the completion of the sentence. If the sentence is informative with the use of one object only, then the predication (*isnâd*) can be regarded as complete.

Consider the following example:



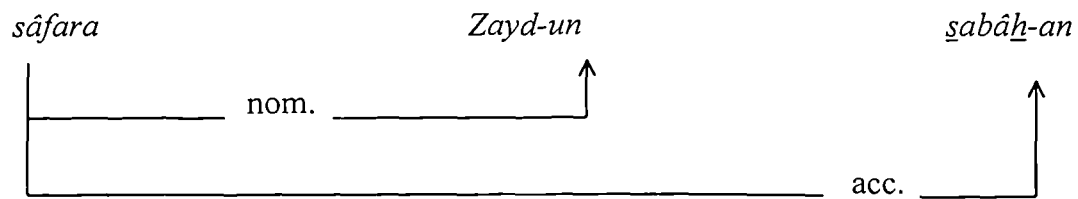
Here, the completion of the meaning of the sentence can take place with one object. The sentence can be informative with one object. It includes a subject and two normal objects. The second object can be governed in the accusative case without the first object. There are verbs that govern three objects. In this case, the first accusative is assumed to be originally a subject and the other two to be a subject and a predicate, as in the sentence:



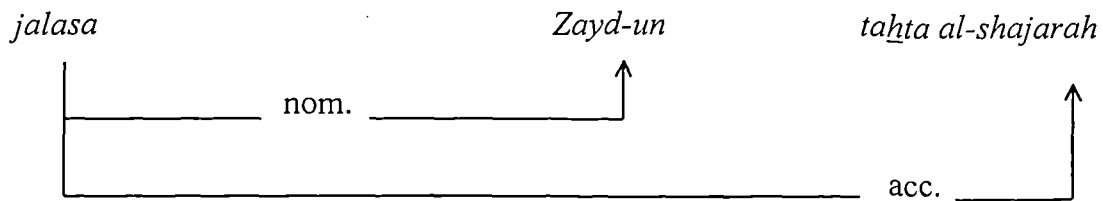


The verb *a'lama* (to inform) causes the subject to be in the nominative, and at the same time it governs three objects in the accusative (cf. Sibawayh 1975 vol. 1, p. 41; Ibn al-Sarrâj 1987 vol. 1, p. 186).

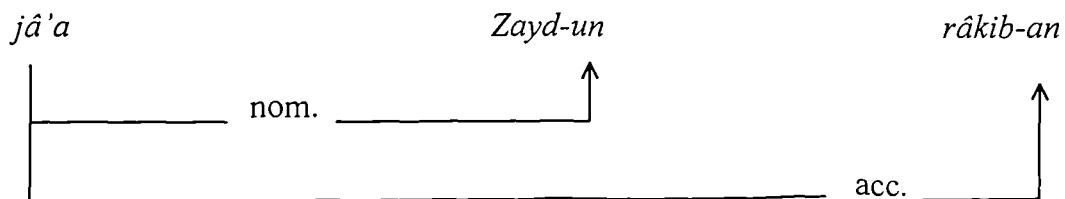
It is not only the direct object that can be regarded as a complement. There are other complements assigned in the accusative case and can be part of a verbal sentence. In this case the main transitive verb governs them to be in the accusative case. These include *ẓarf al-zamân* (adverb of time), *ẓarf al-makân* (adverb of place), *hâl* (circumstantial noun), *tamyîz* (specifier). These are shown below.



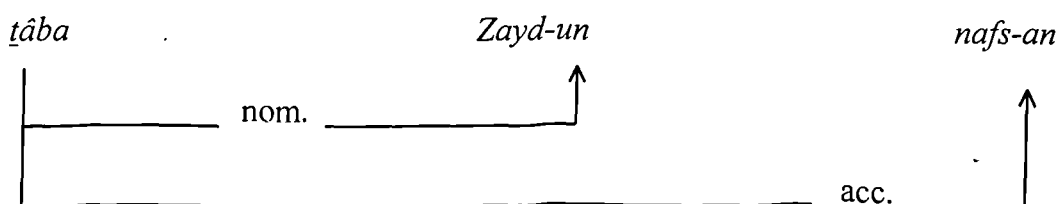
Zayd traveled in the morning.



Zayd sat under the tree.



Zayd came ridding.



Zayd's soul is good.

(cf. Ibn al-Sarrâj 1987 vol. 1, p. 225; Abdeljaber 1985: 89; Levin 1995).

The discussion above shows that the power of the verb to govern its arguments has always been one of the most important elements of the Arabic

theory of government (*'amal*). Arab grammarians use the grammatical term *ya'mal* (to operate) to refer to government. Often they use other terms to refer to syntactic aspects of verb governing nouns around it in the same syntactic environment.

Verbs are in most cases governing elements and only in very limited situations are they influenced by other elements. Examples of this are the imperfect verbs (*af'âl mudâri'ah*), which are liable to be influenced by other agents because they resemble nouns and as such may be preceded by the *lâm* of inception. Consider the following example:

*inna Zayd-an la-qâ'im-un*

Indeed Zayd is standing

Here, the word *qâ'im* is a noun functioning as a predicate and the *lâm* is the *lâm* of inception. Likewise, the imperfect tense can perform the same functions, as the following sentence shows:

*inna Zayd-an la-yaqûm-u*

This applies to imperfect verbs only, and would be impossible with verbs in the past tense and the imperative, as can be seen from the following (cf. al-Anbârî 1945: 317–318; Bohas *et al.* 1990: 67):

*inna Zayd-an la-qâma*

*inna Zayd-an la-qum*

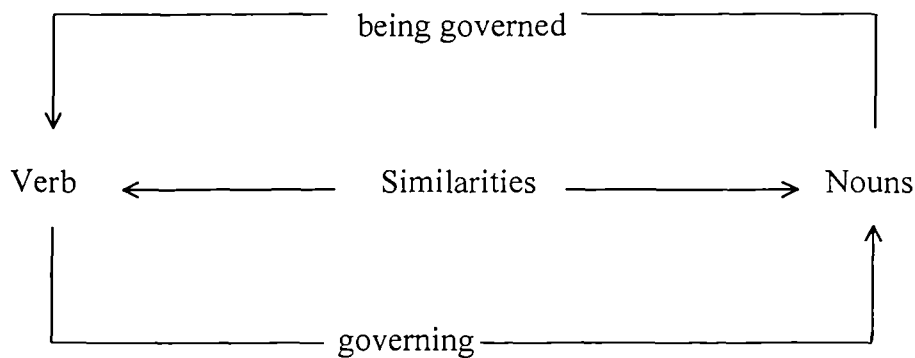
### 4.3.2 Nouns

Unlike verbs, nouns function as governed elements. In this context Ibn al-Sarrâj (1987 vol. 1, p. 54) says:

*i'lam anna al-ism lâ ya'mal-u fi al-fi'l-i wa lâ fi al-ḥarf bal huwa al-mu'arraḍ li al-'awâmil min al-af'âl wa al-ḥurûf*

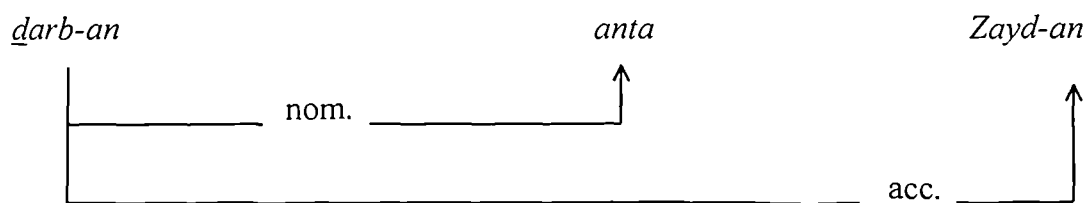
Know that a noun cannot influence a verb or a particle, but is subject to the influence of verbs and particles.

Only in a very few cases do nouns function as governing elements. For this reason, the theory of government assumes that verbs are the principal governing elements. In the case of governing nouns, however, a justification must be given for why they become governing elements. The justification commonly given is that they are similar to verbs, from which they are derived (cf. Ibn al-Sarrâj 1987 vol. 1, p. 52; Itkenon 1991: 141). Nouns derived from verbs have the same function as verbs because, even though they are classified as nouns, they still retain the characteristics of verbs. The following diagram illustrates this similarity.

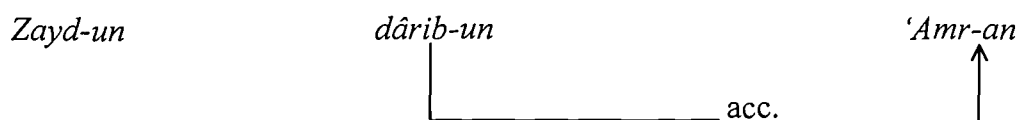


Due to the fact that verbs as we have seen are the strongest governing elements in the sentence structure, nouns that derive from verbs are assumed to have enough force to enable them to govern elements in the sentence. In the following paragraphs four of the most commonly derived nouns will be discussed.

The first type of derivative nouns is the *maṣḍar* (infinitive). This governs its subject in the nominative and its object in the accusative in the same manner that the verb from which it is derived does. (cf. Ibn al-Sarrāj 1987 vol. 1, p. 54):



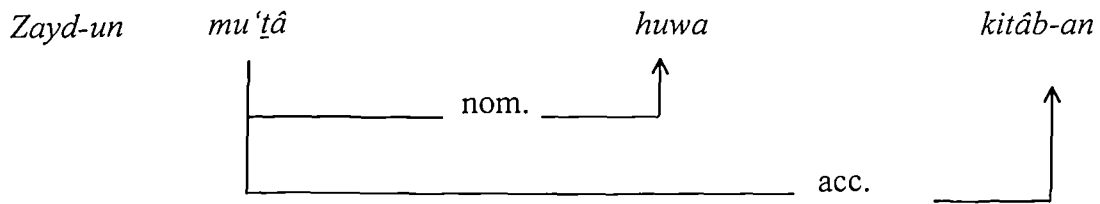
The second group of derivative nouns is the *ism al-fā'il* (the active participle). This governs its governed elements in the same way as the verb from which it is derived does.



The active participle (*ism al-fâ'il*), which is the word *dârib-un*, is a noun derived from the verb *daraba* (to hit), and as such it causes the direct object, which is the word *'Amr-an*, to be governed in the accusative. The Kûfans call the active participle *al-fi'l al-dâ'im* (the tenseless verb; cf. Ibn al-Sarrâj 1987 vol. 1, pp. 52–53; al-Zajjâjî 1983: 244; Abed 1991: 131).

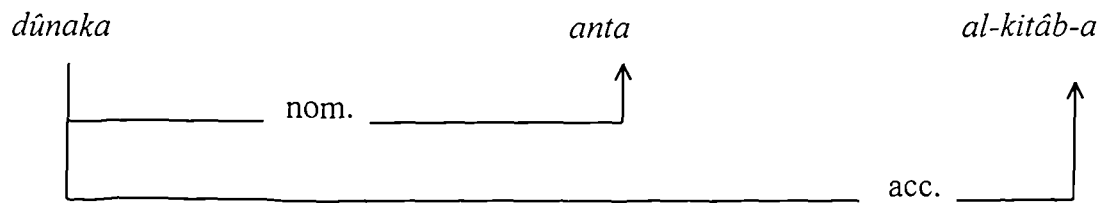
Governing nouns are not in the same level regarding their role in the sentence. Although both *darb* (hitting) and *dârib* (hitter) can be used as governing elements, *darb* is stronger on the ground that it must be followed by a subject and an object whereas the subject of *dârib* is implicit within it because of its participle form. Thus, it needs an object only.

The third type of derivative nouns is the *ism al-maf'ûl* (the passive participle). This governs its governed elements in the same way as the verb from which it is derived does as in:



(Cf. Ibn al-Sarrâj 1987 vol. 1, p. 124.)

The fourth category of derivative nouns is the *ism al-fi'l* (element with verbal force). This functions like an imperative verb, as in the sentence:




(Cf. Sibawayh 1975 vol. 1, p. 241; al-Anbârî 1945: 140.)

Grammarians stress that governing nouns are less powerful than the verbs which they resemble. In other words they do not govern when they follow their governed elements nor when they are ellipted; cf. al-Anbârî 1945: 141).

### 4.3.3 Particles

Particles are considered to be powerful agents in sentence structure, but they do not govern unless they precede specific words. An example of this is *lan*, which precedes imperfect verbs and governs them in the subjunctive mood *naṣb* and *lam*, which precedes imperfect verbs and governs them in the jussive mood, as in the sentence

:

  
*lan yusâfir-a Zayd-un*  
 Zayd will not travel.





*lam yusâfir Zayd-un*

Zayd did not travel

If, however, the particles are not restricted to certain words, they do not govern.

An example is *qad*, which precedes the verb *kâna*, as in:

*qad kâna dhâlik min qabl*

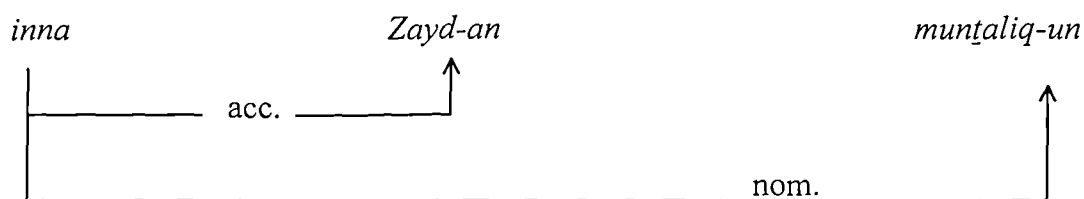
This was [true] before

*qad yakûn-u hâdhâ sahîh-an*

This may be correct

Thus the particles *lan* and *lam* can act as governing elements since they occur only with the imperfect verb. However, the particle *qad* may not act as a governing element since it can occur with both perfect and imperfect verbs (cf. Ibn al-Sarrâj 1987 vol. 1, p. 54–55).

Particles exert a stronger influence than nouns, but they are less powerful than verbs because they sometimes operate but sometimes do not. The most powerful particles that precede a nominal sentence and govern an accusative subject are *inna* and its sisters. The theory of government assumes that these particles govern their subject in the accusative case and their predicate in the nominative case, as in the sentence:



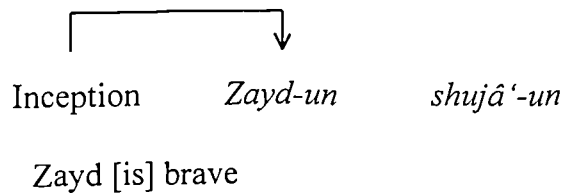
The strong influence of the particle *inna*, like that of its sisters, on the main elements of the sentence following it causes the first noun to be governed in the accusative and the second noun to be governed in the nominative (cf. Ibn al-Sarrâj 1987 vol. 1, p. 55; Levin 1995).

#### 4.4 The abstract governor (*‘âmil ma‘nawî*)

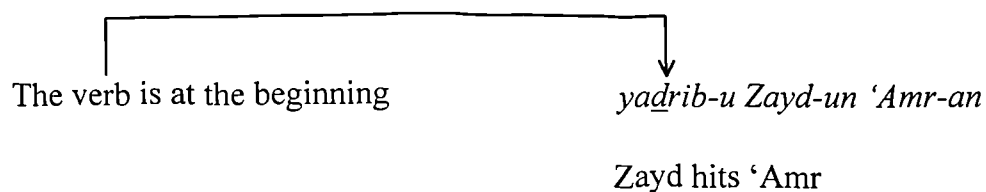
The Arabic theory of government often asserts the existence of an element which is non-existent in the apparent structure. The theory calls this element *‘âmil ma‘nawî* (an abstract governor). The abstract governor which is not a verb or particle is a concept that is created by grammarians to explain parsing signs (*‘alâmât al-i‘râb*) whenever the apparent structure of the sentence does not include an expressed element that is capable to govern the other elements. The following is an illustration of three types of the most common abstract governors adopted by Arab grammarians.

(I) INCEPTION (*ibtidâ'*)

The Baṣrans argue that subject of the nominal sentence is assigned in the nominative case by an abstract governor as in the sentence (cf. Talmon 1993: 278):

(II) ABSENCE OF GOVERNORS (*al-tajarrud min al-'awâmil*)

The governor operating on the imperfect verb (*mudâri'*) to make it in the indicative mood when it occurs at the beginning of the sentence, is also an abstract element. The Arabic theory of government states that the imperfect verb is placed in the subjunctive mood by the presence of subjunctive particles. Furthermore, it is placed in the jussive mood by the presence of jussive particles. On the other hand, when it is in the indicative there are no governing elements preceding it; therefore, it is governed by an abstract governor to be in the indicative mood (*raf'*) because of the absence of expressed governing elements, as in the following example:



(cf. Abdeljaber 1985: 109; Levin 1995).

(III) DISSIMILARITY (*al-khilâf*)

This principle is used to explain parsing signs when a particular word in a particular case has a function different from that of the word that precedes it. The following example illustrates this:

*sâra Zayd-un wa al-ḥâ'ita*  
walked Zayd-nom and the wall-acc

Zayd walked by the wall

If in the sentence above *al-ḥâ'ita* were in the nominative case it would be in a conjoined position, but this is not the case. It is in the accusative case. Grammarians explain the accusativity in this particular case on the ground that there is dissimilarity between the subject and the word that follow what seems to be a conjoining particle.

Thus the abstract governor is not a verb or particle, but a concept which has been determined by grammarians to explain parsing signs (*'alâmât al-i'râb*) in contexts where they do not believe that the explicit or the implicit elements in the sentence explain them (cf. Ibn Jinnî 1957 vol. 1, p. 159; Ibn al-Sarrâj 1987 vol. 1, p. 58; Bohas *et al.* 1990: 60–61; Levin 1995: 221; Abdeljaber 1985: 108).

#### 4.5 Baṣran Kûfan disputes over the governing elements

Despite the agreement of the Baṣran and the Kûfan schools on the main principles of the theory of government, disagreements exist between the two schools over the determination of governing elements. Baṣran scholars were more meticulous than Kûfan scholars in the use and application of the theory of government. Baṣran scholars placed so much emphasis on this theory as that they based their acceptance or rejection of the speech of certain tribes on it. The basis of this disagreement is rooted in the basic principles on which the two schools were founded. The Baṣran school, the foundations of which were laid by al-Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad (cf. Chapter Two), depended greatly on the principle of *al-taʿlīl* (causation) and *qiyās* (analogy).

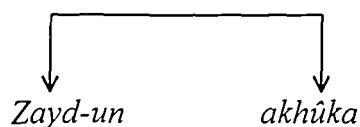
Despite the fact that the Kûfans had originally learned at the hands of the Baṣrans, the Kûfan school pursued a new direction regarding grammatical theory and adopted a different approach to the theory of government. The Kûfans tried to find a new method for analysing the Arabic sentence. They argued, that many of the elements which the Baṣrans had assumed to be governing are not so, and that the influential agents are, in fact, other elements not mentioned by the Baṣrans. They put forward various arguments in support of this position. The following analysis of particular sentences may explain the main areas of dispute between these two famous grammatical schools.

## EXAMPLE 1

*Zayd-un akhûka*

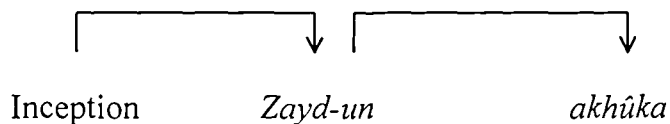
Zayd is your brother

The Kûfans argue that the *mubtada'* (subject) and the *khavar* (predicate) in the above example are responsible for the mutual causation of the nominative in the two nouns (i.e. each causes other to be in the nominative):



The explanation they give for this is that neither of these two elements can exist without the other. They argue that this is the best way to analyse this type of sentence.

The Baṣrans, on the other hand, argue that in the above sentence the subject is governed in the nominative by an abstract governor (cf. 4.4) which is the *ibtidā'* (inception), and that the predicate is governed in the nominative by the subject:



The Kûfans reject the idea of an abstract governor at the beginning of the sentence in this example (cf. al-Anbârî 1945: 31–38). One can maintain that the

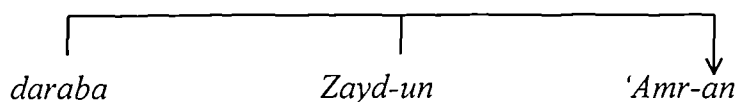
Kûfans do not accept the idea of an abstract governor if there is a potential expressed governor in the sentence.

#### EXAMPLE 2

*ḍaraba Zayd-un 'Amr-an*

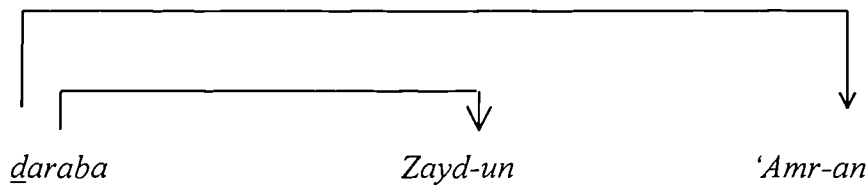
Zayd hit 'Amr

The Kûfans argue that what causes the accusative in the direct object in this example is the verb and the subject:



They explain this by arguing that the direct object comes after both the verb and the subject. They base their opinion on their view that the verb and its subject can be viewed as one element (i.e. the verb and its subject function like one word).

The Baṣrans, on the other hand, argue that what causes the accusative in the above example is the transitive verb only, which at the same time causes the nominative in the subject. This is based on the ground that the standard governing elements are verbs. Nouns do not govern except when they resemble verbs:



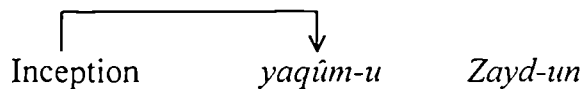
They also dispute the Kûfan view, arguing that it contradicts the basic principle of the theory of government, which says that nouns do not influence nouns, especially those which are not derived from verbs (cf. al-Anbârî 1945: 56–57).

### EXAMPLE 3

*yaqûm-u Zayd-un*

Zayd is standing

The Baṣrans argue that what causes the *dammah* (indicative mood) in the imperfect verb here is an abstract governor because the verb comes at the beginning of the sentence and as such resembles a noun in taking a *dammah* (cf. 4.4).



The Kûfans respond to this analysis by arguing that if the imperfect tense can be governed in the indicative mood when it resembles a noun, it should then be governed in the *naṣb* (subjunctive) in sentences like

*kâna Zayd-un yaqûm-u*



But the verb *yaqûm-u* is governed in the *raf'* (indicative mood) despite the fact that it functions as a predicate of *kâna*, which is normally a noun. Hence, if the Baṣrans were correct, the verb *yaqûm-u* would have been in the subjunctive. For this reason the Kûfans believe that if the imperfect verb falls at the beginning of a sentence, it is governed in the *raf'* (indicative mood) because it is not preceded by any particle governing the jussive or the subjunctive. Quite often, however, the imperfect verb is preceded by one of these particles and is governed in either the subjunctive or the jussive but if it is not preceded by one of these particles it should be governed in the *raf'* (indicative mood; cf. al-Anbârî 1945: 319–320).

Thus, there are two types of abstract governor in this case:

1. The element occurs at the beginning of the sentence so as to resemble a noun (the Baṣran view).
2. The element is void of any expressed elements: that is, there is no expressed governor before the element (the Kûfan view).

#### EXAMPLE 4

*A* *aṭi' Allâh-a ḥattâ yudkhillak-a al-jannah*

*B* *sahirt-u ḥattâ al-ṣabâḥ*

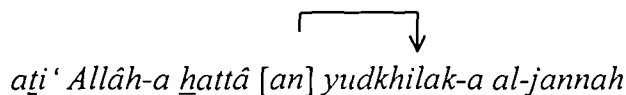
The Kûfans argue that the particle *hattâ* influences the word that comes after it, depending on its meaning in the structure. For instance, in sentence A it implies the meaning of *kay* (in order) and has produced the accusative in the imperfect verb that comes after it:



In sentence B it implies the meaning of *ilâ* (until) and has produced the genitive in the noun that comes after it:



The Baṣrans, however, argue that the particle *hattâ* in sentence A does not operate by itself and that the governor is the assumed particle *an* (that) after *hattâ* and that accordingly the assumed structure of the sentence is:

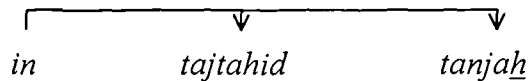


They justify this view by arguing that the particle *hattâ* is one of the influencing agents that are associated with nouns: according to one of the basic principles of the theory of government, certain influencing agents influence certain words and not others. For example, some influence only nouns whereas others influence only verbs (cf. Ibn Hishâm [n. d.] vol. 1, pp. 122–133).

## EXAMPLE 5

*in tajtahid tanjah*

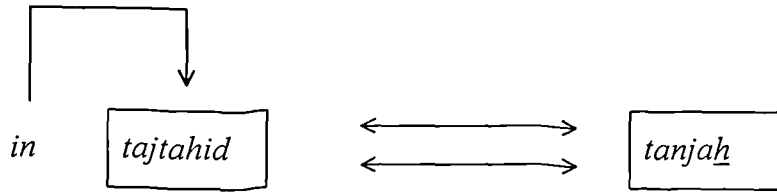
The Baṣrans maintain that the agent governing the two verbs in the jussive in the above sentence is the conditional particle *in*:



They explain this by arguing that the conditional particle needs these two verbs, the conditional verb and the result that depends on the condition, because the sentence will have no informative meaning without both being present after the conditional particle.

Further explanation of the Baṣran claim is provided by al-Anbârî (1945: 355), who argues that the conditional particle *in* influences the second verb via the first verb. According to al-Anbârî, the role played by the conditional particle resembles that of fire whereas that played by the conditional verb is like that of a pot, and the result of the condition is like water. In other words, fire heats up water through the pot.

The Kûfans believe that the conditional particle does not influence the verb that functions as the result of the condition (*jawâb al-shart*), but that its influence is confined to the conditional verb only. They add that the result of the condition is governed in the jussive because it is next to (*yujâwir*), a verb which is governed in the jussive:



Consider the following Qur'ânic verse (5, 6):

*yâ ayyuhâ alladhîna âmanû idhâ qumtum ilâ al-ṣalâh fa ighsilû wujûhakum wa aydiyakum ilâ al-marâfiq wa amsahû bi-ru'ûsikum wa arjulikum ilâ al-ka'bayn*

Ye who believe ! when ye prepare for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands [and arms] to the elbows, rub your heads [with water], and wash your feet to the ankles.

According to the reading of Ibn Abî 'Amr, Ibn Kathîr, Hamzah, Yahyâ, Abû Ja'far and Khalaf, the word *arjulikum* is governed in the genitive, while according to Nâfi', Ibn 'Amir, al-Kisâ'î and Hafṣ it is governed in the accusative (i.e. *wa 'arjulakum*; cf. al-Anbârî 1945: 253).

It must be pointed out that the various Qur'ânic readings depend on narration. In other words, readers of the Qur'ân inherited their readings from their forefathers who passed them on from one generation to the next, independently of the grammarians' suppositions. Nevertheless, the combining of Qur'ânic and linguistic studies in their early stages of development forced grammarians to attach greater emphasis to the various readings of the Qur'ân in analysing them and using them as evidence for the correctness of their grammar rules (cf. al-Tawîl 1995; Shah 1996). In other words, when the Qur'ânic readings accorded

with the rules of grammar they were used as evidence but if disagreement existed between these readings and the rules of grammar the readings remained as they were because of their authenticity, grammatical rules being viewed as mere deductions from various writings.

In the above verse, the reading with the word *arjulakum* in the accusative agrees with the basic rules of grammar put forward by the Baṣrans. This is because the word *arjulakum* is coupled with the word *aydiyakum*, and all Muslim imams agree that the feet should be washed during ablution (*wuḍūʾ*).

The Baṣrans also believe that the reading in which the word *arjulikum* is governed in the genitive accords with Baṣran grammar because the word is coupled with *bi-ruʾūsikum* and *imsahū*, which here means *ighsilū* (wash). The Kūfans, however, argue that the word *arjulikum* is governed in the genitive not because it is coupled with *aydiyakum* but because it is next to the word *ruʾūsikum*, which is governed in the genitive. They cite this verse as proof that an element can take the same parsing signs as a neighbouring word. Thus they argue that *jawâb al-shart* (the result of the condition) is governed in the jussive because it is next to a verb which is governed in the jussive.

It is clear that the argument that the conditional particle influences both *fiʾl al-shart* (the conditional) verb and *jawâb al-shart* (the result of the condition) is the simpler one because of the link between the particle and the two verbs. This is in contrast to the less rational argument, which maintain that the result of the condition is governed in the jussive because it is next to a verb governed in the jussive (or the result of the condition). It is difficult to argue that the influencing agents influence words next to them without there being a semantic relationship

between the influencing agents and the influenced elements (cf. Sibawayh 1975 vol. 3, p. 62; al-Zajjâjî 1983: 68–69).

#### EXAMPLE 6

*lâ ta'kul al-samak-a wa tashrab-a al-laban-a*

Desist from eating fish and drinking milk

The Baṣrans argue that the governing element that has produced the *naṣb* (subjunctive) in the verb *tashrab-a* is the assumed *an* after *wâw al-'atf* (*wâw* of coupling). According to this view the assumed sentence should then read:

*lâ ta'kul al-samak-a wa [an] tashrab-a al-laban-a*

This is because *an* and the verb *tashrab-a* form a nominal (*an tashrab-a*), which refers to the act of *al-shurb* (drinking), and this nominal is coupled with the word *al-samak-a* which is a direct object.

The Kûfans, however, argue that what has caused the verb *tashrab-a* to be in the subjunctive is an abstract governor, which they call *al-ṣarf* (deviation). That is, the verb *tashrab-a* has deviated from its original function of being governed in the jussive and coupled with the verb *ta'kul*, so that the meaning of the sentence is:

Desist from eating fish and drinking milk (completely).

By contrast, the sentence in which the verb *tashrab-a* is governed in the subjunctive has the meaning:

Desist from eating and drinking milk (at the same time).

Thus, the verb in this case has assumed a new parsing sign and conveys a different meaning. This change in the parsing sign and in the function of the verb is called by the Kûfans *al-ṣarf*. They consider it to be an abstract element that can produce new parsing signs in some elements in the sentence (cf. Ibn Hishâm [n. d.] vol. 2, p.354; al-Anbârî 1945: 323–325).

However, it seems that what grammarians call *‘âmil ma‘nawî* is open to various interpretations. Grammarians often resort to this notion in support of what they have previously agreed upon in terms of general principles. Both the Baṣrans and the Kûfans have used *‘âmil ma‘nawî* in certain situations and rejected it in others.

Any linguistic school that does not accept the concept of *‘âmil ma‘nawî* in the analysis of a certain sentence tries to find another interpretation as a substitute: that is, it forces the sentence to convey another meaning, in which one of its elements becomes an expressed governor. But if it is not possible to come up with a reasonable interpretation the school will resort to assuming that an element has been ellipted from the sentence which can be regarded as a governor, just as the Baṣrans have done in the above example.

#### EXAMPLE 7

*‘âlim-an laysa Zayd-un*

Zayd is not a scholar

According to the Baṣrans the above sentence is grammatical. They argue that it is arbitrary for *laysa* (not to be) to come before its governed predicate. Consequently, they consider it as powerful as any other verb that governs, regardless of the location of the governed words.

For the Kufans, the above sentence is ungrammatical. They argue that it is compulsory for *laysa* to precede its governed predicate. They further maintain that although it is true that *laysa* governs like other verbs, it is less powerful than others are because it is a defective verb (*jâmid*). As such weak verbs cannot follow their governed predicates (cf. al-Anbârî 1945: 103–107; al-Zajjâjî 1983: 3; Hasan 1974: 559).

#### EXAMPLE 8

*'âlim-an mâ zâla Zayd-un*

Zayd is still a scholar

The Baṣrans argue that the above example is grammatically incorrect and they justify the ungrammaticality of this example on the grounds that *mâ* is for negation and that particles of negation must initiate sentences. As for the Kûfans, however, the example is grammatical and the basis for grammaticality judgement is that *mâ zâla*'s preceding the word it governs is optional. They justify this view by arguing that *mâ* in this case negates the verb *zâla*, which implies negation by itself. In addition, they assert that when one negates a thing that is already negated, this implies affirmation. In this case the verb *mâ zâla* has the force of the verb *kâna* (to be); therefore, it is not obligatory for *mâ zâla* to precede its



governed words as do *kâna* and its other sisters. (cf. al-Anbârî 1945: 99–102; Hasan 1974: 562).

The above examples show how the main traditional schools differ in the approach they take to governing elements in the Arabic sentence. (cf. Abdeljaber 1985: 92-93; Levin 1995).

## 4.6 Critics of the theory of government

Some Arab linguists, instead of assuming either an expressed or an abstract governing element in a sentence, believe that the governor is God, the creator of the language. Some Arab linguists argue that the governor is the speaker who uses the language. This argument can be found in the work of linguists such as Ibn Maḍâ' (1988: 77), who called for the abolition of the theory of government:

*ammâ madhhabu ahl al-ḥaq fa inna hâdhih-i al-aṣwât innamâ hiya min fî'l Allâh ta'âlâ wa innamâ tunsabu ilâ al-insân kamâ yunsab-u ilayh sâ'ir af'âlih al-ikhtiyâriyyah, wa ammâ al-qawl bi-anna al-alfâz yuhdith-u ba'duhâ ba'd-an fa-bâtil-un 'aql-an wa shar'-an lâ yaqûl-u bihi aḥad-un min al-'uqalâ'*

As far as the opinion of bearers of truth is [concerned], these vowels [parsing signs] are created by Almighty God and they are apportioned to man like any other of his freely chosen acts. But to say that words influence each other is false both logically and religiously. No able minded person would accept this.

The argument that the governing agent is the speaker of the words himself, on the other hand, can also be found in Ibn Jinnî (1957 vol. 1, pp. 109–110):

*fa-ammâ fi al-ḥaqîqah wa mahsûl al-ḥadîth fa al-‘amal min al-raf’  
wa al-naṣb wa al-jarr wa al-jazm innamâ huwa li al-mutakallim  
nafsih lâ li-shay’-in ghayrih*

In fact, the speaker makes the effect, with its nominative, accusative, genitive or jussive representations himself and no one else.

It is clear from the passages quoted above that neither Ibn Maḍâ’ nor Ibn Jinnî were trying to put forward an interpretation of the theory of government. Instead, they were both trying to destroy its pillars. The argument that the sentences the speaker uses are God-given and that grammarians have no right to explain the reasons for their being in this form is a call for the destruction of the theory. It is also an attempt to prohibit any effort to study sentence structure. Moreover, the argument that the influencing agent is the speaker himself means that the speaker composes sentences in complete freedom, which contradicts the observation of grammarians. This view also does not take into account the efforts that have been made to discover rules and general theories based on accurate observation of the language rather than grammarians’ own imaginings.

Ibn Maḍâ’ al-Qurṭubî (592/1195) set out his views on this subject in his book *al-Radd ‘alâ al-Nuḥâh* (Refutation of the Grammarians), in which he claims that the abolition of this theory would make grammar much easier to learn. He argues (1988: 85) that the parsing signs on the last radicals of words bear no

relation to the function of the word in the sentence. In his introduction he writes (1988: 76):

*qaṣḍī fī hādhā al-kitāb an aḥdhifa min al-naḥw mā yastaghni al-naḥwī  
'anh-u wa unabbih 'alā mā ajma'ū 'alā al-khata' fih fa min dhālika  
iddi'ā'uhum anna al-naṣba wa al-khaḍa wa al-jazm lā yakūn-u illā  
bi-'āmil-in lafẓī aw bi-'āmil-in ma'nawī*

My aim in this book is to remove from grammar what a grammarian does not need and to draw attention to erroneous views, such as the [grammarians'] claim that the *naṣb* [the accusative or subjunctive ending], the *khaḍ* [genitive ending] and the *jazm* [the jussive ending] cannot occur without an expressed or an abstract element.

Ibn Maḍā' wished to remove from Arabic grammar everything that is too complex and too philosophical. Thus, he concentrated his attack on the theory of government and called for its abolition, just as he also called for the abolition of what grammarians call second and third type causation (cf. Chapter Two).

One contemporary Arab linguist who strongly opposes the theory of government is Ibrāhīm Anīs, who expressed his views this issue in his book *min asrār al-'Arabiyyah*. He devotes a whole chapter, entitled *qissat al-i'rāb*, to his criticisms. He claims in this chapter that parsing signs are an artifact of grammarians (1978: 198). In another chapter, entitled *laysa li al-ḥarakah al-i'arābiyyah madlūl*, (ibid.: 237), he also claims:

*lam takun al-ḥarakāt al-i'rābiyyah tuḥaddid al-ma'ānī fī adhhān al-  
'arab al-qudamā' kamā yaz'um al-nuḥāh bal lā ta'dū an takūna*

*ḥarakât-in yuḥtâj-u ilayhâ fî kathîr-in min al-ahyân li wasl-i al-kalimât ba'dihâ bi ba'd*

The parsing signs did not determine the meanings in the minds of the old Bedouin Arabs as grammarians believe, and they are no more than signs which are needed in most cases to connect words with each other.

(cf. Amaireh 1987: 67–83; Nakamura 1974).

To deny the presence of the parsing signs is obviously a denial of the theory of government itself, which is an explanation for the presence of parsing signs. Anîs cites some examples to explain the unimportance of the parsing signs in determining the required meaning. Among these are the following:

#### EXAMPLE 1

*jâ'anî man bâ'a al-samak-a*

*jâ'anî bâi'-u al-samak-i*

The person who sells fish has come to me

In the first sentence the word *al-samak-a* (the fish) is in the accusative while in the second it is in the genitive. Anîs claims that there is no difference in meaning between the two sentences.

## EXAMPLE 2

*sahirt-u al-laylat-a al-mâdiyah*

*sahirt-u fî al-laylat-i al-mâdiyah*

I did not sleep last night

Here, in the first sentence the word *al-laylat-a* (the night) is in the accusative, while in the second sentence it is in the genitive. Anîs claims that here also there is no difference in meaning between the two sentences. He argues (1978: 240) that the dropping of the parsing signs does not change the required meaning.

While Anîs and Ibn Maďâ' agree on the rejection of the theory of government, and demand that it be dropped altogether from Arabic grammar, disagreement between the two scholars exists, in that Anîs believes that the parsing signs on the last consonant of words are there because there is a tendency among speakers to join words together. If a speaker joins words together he needs these signs, whereas when he stops there is no need for them. Ibn Maďâ', on the other hand, believes that the parsing signs form part of the words to which they are attached.

Anîs's total rejection of the role of the parsing signs in the required meaning is evident from the following (1978: 242):

*falaysat ĥarakât-u al-i'râb fî ra'yî 'unsur-an min 'anâsir al-binyah fî al-kalimât wa laysat dalâ'il 'alâ al-ma'ânî kamâ yadunn al-nuhâh bal inna al-aşl fî kull kalimah huwa sukûn âkhirihâ sawâ'-un fî hâdhâ mâ yusammâ bi al-mabnî aw al-mu'rab idh yûqaf-u 'alâ kilayhimâ bi al-*

*sukûn wa tabqâ ma'a hâdhâ wâdihât al-sighah lam tafqid min  
ma'âlimihâ shay'-an*

In my view the parsing signs do not form a part of words, and they are not indicative of the meaning, as grammarians believe. The principle is that the last radicals of the words are quiescent whether these are declinable or not. In both cases one should make the last radical quiescent because words are very clear and do not lose any part of their original function.

What determines subject and object in Anîs's view is word order. He emphasises that the circumstances in which the speech was uttered assists linguists in determining the elements of the sentence (ibid.: 243). He illustrates his view by arguing that the subject of the sentence is not distinguished as a subject because it is in the nominative, nor is the object distinguished as an object because it is in the accusative. Rather, both forms are distinguished by their place in the sentence, which is determined by the style of the language. Hence, if one of the forms deviates from its normal position, it should be easy for linguists to trace it in its new position. Anîs's view can be illustrated by the following:

1. The subject in the Arabic language comes after the verb and before the direct object, as in:

*akala Zayd-un tuffâhat-an*  
ate Zayd-nom. apple-acc.

Zayd ate an apple

2. There are particular circumstances in which the direct object may come before the subject. One of these is the case of restriction (*ḥasr*), as in the following:

*lâ ya'rif-u al-ḥubb-a illâ man yukâbiduhu*  
no know-ind. the love-acc. except who suffer it

Only the person who endures love can understand what it feels like

The views of Anîs are rejected by most Arab linguists because the association of parsing signs with meaning has been deeply rooted in Arabic linguistic thought since its inception. The following examples serve to confirm this:

#### EXAMPLE 1

*ḍaraba 'Amr-an Zayd-un*

'Amr was hit by Zayd

Here, *Zayd-un* remains the subject despite the fact that it comes after the direct object, and *'Amr-an* remains the direct object even though it comes before the subject.

#### EXAMPLE 2

*nahn-u al-'Arab-u*

We are the Arabs

*nahn-u al-‘Arab-a nukrim-u al-dayf-a*

We [I mean] the Arabs show hospitality to our guests

The word *al-‘Arab-u* in the first sentence is governed in the nominative, while in the second sentence it is governed in the accusative because it has a different function in each of the two sentence. In the first sentence it is a predicate and in the second sentence it is a direct object for an ellipted verb which can be estimated as *akhuss-u* (I mean), to make the assumed structure of the sentence read:

*nahn-u akhuss-u al-‘Arab-a nukrim-u al-dayf-a*

### EXAMPLE 3

*kam kitâb-an qara’ta*

*kam kitâb-in qara’ta*

The word *kitâb* in the first sentence is governed in the accusative because it is functioning as *tamyîz* (specifier), and the purpose of the question is to ascertain the number of books the addressee has read, while in the second sentence it is governed in the genitive because it is a *mudâf*, and what the sentence describes is the large number of books read by the addressee (cf. Ibn al-Sarrâj 1987 vol. 1, p. 222; ‘Amaireh: 1987: 81).

Anîs thinks that classical Arabic was used without vocalisation just like modern Arabic dialects. This idea can be rejected on the basis that the absence of parsing signs in modern Arabic dialects does not necessarily mean that Arabic did



not have them in the pre-Islamic era. It can be argued that the loss of inflections in the modern Arabic dialects is a recent phenomenon. However, we must emphasise that not only through parsing signs we know the function of words (cf. Abdeljaber 1985: 85; Levin 1995; Amaireh 1987: 80-82).

Advocates of the theory of government do not dispute the fact that God creates language. They believe that God has induced humans to use language in various ways. They also believe that the speaker has freedom to use the language in whichever way he chooses and freedom to form sentences in various ways. They simply argue that all this should not stand in the way of systematic research which aims at observing the language in order to deduce rules that may help anyone who wishes to use language correctly as did its native speakers. They also aim to determine the function performed by each individual element in the sentence.

#### **4.7 Contemporary attempts to amend the theory of government**

Among contemporary Arab linguists, there are some who try to develop the Arabic theory of sentence analysis by introducing new ideas from modern linguistics, so that the two methodologies exist side by side. Among these is Khalil 'Amaireh.

‘Amaireh agrees with Arab grammarians in defining the sentence as the bare minimum of words that carry the informative meaning (1987: 87). Nevertheless, he attempts to develop sentence analysis by attaching more importance to semantic elements. He draws upon the claims of transformational grammar that both the nominal and the verbal sentence may consist of a surface structure and a deep structure. He sees the principal aim of the deep structure of the sentence as being to relate information only.

‘Amaireh enumerates five elements which he calls *‘anâsir al-tahwîl* (the transformational elements), which if introduced into the deep structure of sentence transform it into a surface structure. These five elements are as follows.

#### 4.7.1 Word order

On this issue ‘Amaireh adopts the view of al-Jurjânî and the Arab grammarians before him, who argue that a particular element of a sentence can be preposed for semantic purposes such as emphasis. The sentence

*Zayd-un jâ’a*

Zayd came.

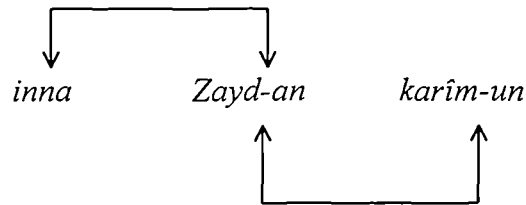
for example has its assumed form

*jâ’a Zayd-un*

but the subject is placed in a preposed position for a semantic purpose (in this case, to draw attention to Zayd).

### 7.1.2 Augmenting

This refers to the addition of an element to the deep structure of the sentence to make it a surface structure for a semantic purpose. For example, the sentence



is a surface structure derived from the deep structure:

*Zayd-un karîm-un*

Zayd is generous.

The purpose of *inna* (indeed) is to provide emphasis.

### 4.7.3 Ellipsis

The ellipsis of an element from a sentence transforms it from a deep structure into a surface structure. For example, the sentence

*Zayd-un*

as an answer to the question *man jâ'a?*. (Who came?) is a surface structure of a sentence which has the deep structure:

*jâ'a Zayd-un*

Zayd came.

However, the ellipsis has added to the sentence a semantic aspect, the purpose of which is brevity.

#### 4.7.4 Parsing signs

‘Amaireh believes that the parsing signs have a semantic value, and can transform the sentence from a deep structure into a surface structure with a different meaning from that of the basic sentence. For example, the sentence

*kam kitâb-an qara't ?*

How many books have you read ?

is a surface structure of the sentence

*kam kitâb-in qara't*

You have read many books

The first sentence is interrogative while the second is informative.

#### 4.7.5 Intonation

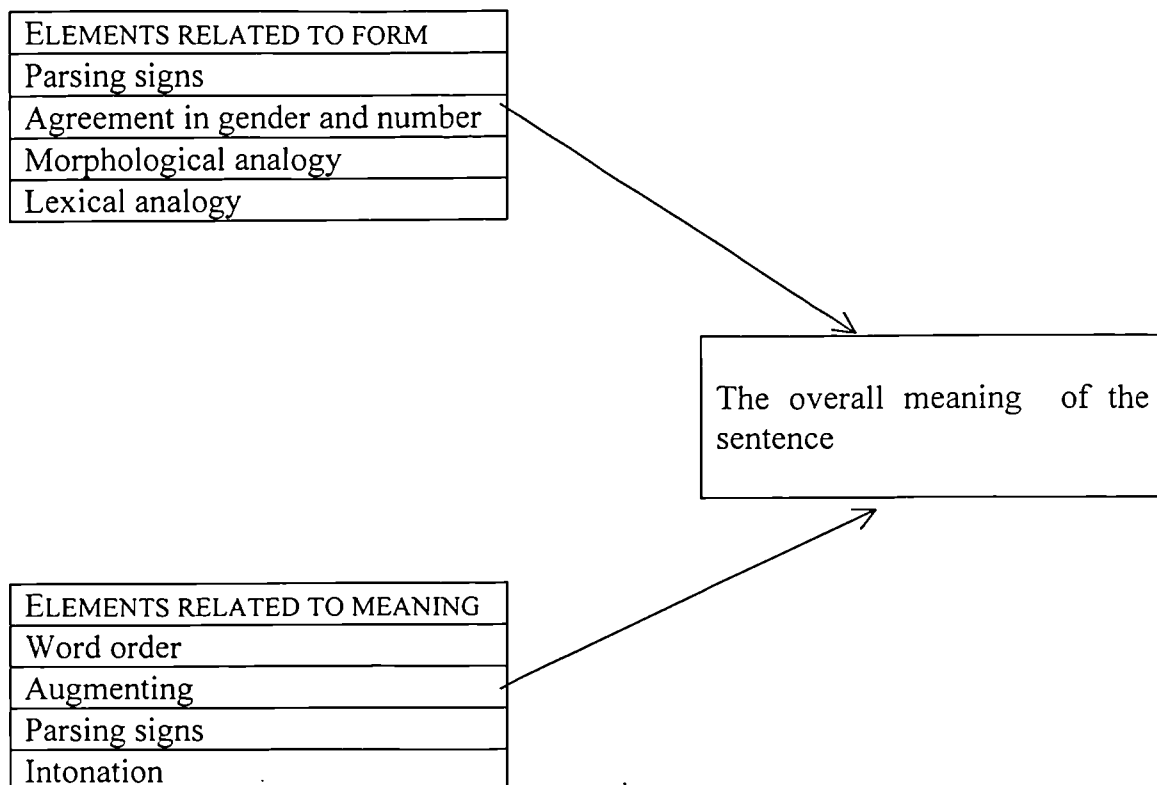
‘Amaireh argues that the deep structure of the sentence can also be transformed by changing its intonation to give it a totally different meaning. For example the sentence

*Zayd-un karîm-un*

can be transformed into an interrogative or an exclamatory sentence.

‘Amaireh therefore disagrees with traditional grammarians over the claim that parsing signs are the result of the influence of the governing elements on the affected elements in the sentence. He put forward an alternative to this theory by adopting the five elements discussed above. However, in putting forward this alternative, he appears to maintain that Arab grammarians give the surface form

of the sentence more importance than the overall meaning it carries. For this reason he has adopted a methodology combining both the form of the sentence and the overall meaning of the sentence. This can be expressed diagrammatically as follows (Amaireh 1987: 91).



Amaireh has attempted to eliminate some ideas from the traditional Arabic linguistics and replace them with new ones. In other words, he argues that the dependence of Arab linguists, especially grammarians, on the theory of government has resulted in shortcomings in the analysis of the Arabic sentence.

The same concerns as are discussed by Amaireh can be found in the work of another prominent contemporary Arab linguist, Tammâm Hassân, who has

adopted the concept of *ta'liq*. This concept was put forward by al-Jurjânî in his book *Dalâ'il al-I'jâz* as an alternative to the theory of government. Hassân (1985: 189) suggests that the concept of *ta'liq*, which means establishing relations between syntactical meanings and the context or situation, is more accurate than the concept of *'amal* as a means of analysing Arabic sentential structure:

*wa fî ra'yî, kamâ fî r'ay 'Abdul Qâhir 'alâ aqwâ ihtimâl anna al-ta'liq huwa al-fikrah al-markaziyyah fî al-naḥw al-'arabî wa anna fahm al-ta'liq 'alâ wajh-in kâf-in wahdah-u li al-qadâ' 'alâ khurâfat al-'âmal al-naḥwî wa al-'awâmil al-naḥwiyyah, li-anna al-ta'liq yuhaddid bi-wâsitat al-qarâ'in ma'ânî al-abwâb fî al-siyâq wa yufassir al-'alâqât baynahâ 'alâ sûrat-in awfâ wa afdal wa akthar naf'-an fî al-tahlîl al-lughawî li-hâdhih-i al-ma'ânî al-wazîfiyyah al-naḥwiyyah*

In my view, as, most probably, in the view of 'Abdul Qâhir [al-Jurjânî], *al-ta'liq* is the central idea in Arabic grammar and only an understanding all of its aspects will rid people of the superstition of grammatical government and its operators. This is because using the context (*al-ta'liq*) determines the meaning of [all the grammatical] issues in the text and explains the relationship between them in a way which is more comprehensive, better and more useful in the linguistic analysis of these meanings and their grammatical functions.

Accordingly, both Amaireh and Hassân have been strongly influenced by al-Jurjânî's treatment of the relationship between the elements forming the sentence. However, they disagree with al-Jurjânî on the use of general statements to explain the concept of *ta'liq*, in particular the phrase *bi-ḥasab mawqi' ba'dihâ min ba'd* (according to their position in relation to others).

Al-Jurjânî deals with this under a more general theory called *nazm* (construction; cf. Chapter Six). In this regard he writes (1984: 87):

*wa idh qad 'arafta anna madâr-a amr al-nazm 'alâ ma'ânî al-nahw  
wa 'alâ al-wujûh wa al-furûq allatî min sha'nihâ an takûn-a fih fa-  
i'lam anna al-furûq-a wa al-wujûh kathîrah laysa lahâ ghâyah taqîf-u  
'indahâ wa nihâyah lâ tajîd-u lahâ izdiyâd-an ba'dahâ thumma i'lam  
an laysat al-maziyyah bi-wâjibah lahâ fî anfusihâ wa min hayth-u hiya  
'alâ al-i'tlâq wa lâkin ta'rid-u bi-sabab al- ma'ânî wa al-aghrâd allatî  
yûda'-u lahâ al-kalâm thumma bi-hasab mawqi' ba'dihâ min ba'd*

If you comprehend the influences of *nazm* on grammatical meaning and on the different circumstances that it should include, you must understand that these circumstances are too numerous and have no limits, and you must know once again that distinctions are not an end in themselves or absolute. Rather, they are mentioned to serve the meaning and objectives of the speech according to their position in relation to others.

The suggestions of Amaireh and Hassân are extremely valuable, and these linguists are probably right in criticising Arabic sentential theory. However, although these scholars have attempted to incorporate traditional Arabic linguistic theory with insights from modern linguistic theory they have not devised any concrete replacement for the basic theory put forward by traditional Arab linguists.

One can suggest that the field of Arabic Linguistics is still in need of such efforts that make classical Arabic ideas readable for the contemporary reader. At the same time we need to compare the traditional Arabic linguistic theory with

aspects of Western linguistics without losing the uniqueness of the Arabic linguistic heritage. This is because the Arabic linguistic thinking is strongly linked with Islamic theology. This gives this scholarship a distinctive feature that cannot be matched in any other linguistic tradition.



**CHAPTER FIVE**

**ELLIPSIS IN ARABIC GRAMMATICAL STUDIES**

Know that nothing can be ellipped unless the sentence that remains contains an indicator of what has been ellipped.

Ibn al-Sarrâj (1987 vol. 2, p. 254)

## 5.1 Introduction

Arabic grammatical studies, as Chapter Two explains, were first developed as an educational aid whose main aim was to teach foreign speakers to use the Arabic language correctly. This was the original basis for grammatical studies, which were later developed further in response to demands from both Arabs and non-Arabs to study grammar as a means of improving their linguistic scholarship. Arab grammarians responded to this demand from the wider public by making a determined effort to study the language in a methodical manner, based on regular principles. Among other things, grammarians studied elliptical sentences. Their study of elliptical sentences combines both theoretical and applied aspects. At the theoretical level they paid particular attention to the principles which every linguist must observe when analysing the sentence in order to deduce the ellipped element(s).

On the applied side, Arab grammarians accorded special importance to authentication from the Qur'ân and from Arabic poetry. They never endorsed any linguistic principle that has no support from these sources. Despite the wealth of analysis devoted to ellipsis in Arabic grammar, most of these attempts have concentrated chiefly on the function of the omitted elements in the sentence.

In their writings about elliptical sentences, Arab grammarians have used three terms to denote the process of ellipsis. These terms are *ḥadhf*, *idmâr* and *taqdîr*. Their main aim was to lay down some broad general principles for regulating the various elements of the elliptical sentence, after carefully analysing examples from the Qur'ân and from poetry.

It is clear that Arab grammarians shun those aspects of ellipsis that bear no relation to their prime objective, which is to lay down basic syntactical rules that help people to avoid making mistakes. Ibn Hishâm (vol. 2, pp. 649–650) elaborates on this when he writes:

*tanbîh: al-ḥadhf-u alladh-î yalzam-u al-naḥwî al-naẓar-u fih-i huwa mâ iqtadath-u al-sinâ'ah wa dhalika bi-an yajid-a khabar-an bi-dûn-i mubtada' aw bi-al'aks aw shart-an bidûn-i jazâ' aw bi-al'aks aw ma'tûf-an bi-dûn-i ma'tûf-in 'alayh aw bi-al'aks aw ma'mûl-an bi-dûn-i âmil*

Caution: grammarians deal with ellipsis only if the grammar requires them to do so, such as in case of the presence of a *khabar* without a *mubtada'* or vice versa, or a condition without a result, a co-ordinator without an antecedent or vice versa, or a governed element without a governing element.

This chapter covers most of the issues relating to the ellipsis of elements of the Arabic sentence; or, to be more precise, most of the types of Arabic sentence which Arab grammarians regard as elliptical. It also discusses the way in which Arab grammarians assume ellipted elements. The chapter begins with an explanation of the terms Arab grammarians use in dealing with ellipsis. It also discusses the means that assist in the identification of ellipted elements, including situational indicators (*al-qarâ'in al-ḥâliyyah*) and expressed indicators (*al-qarâ'in al-lafziyyah*). It also covers some of the reasons Arab grammarians put forward for why ellipsis takes place, and the most important considerations that

should be taken into account when dealing with elliptical sentences. Finally, it discusses a number of sentences which were the focus of considerable dispute between the Baṣran and Kûfan schools as regards whether elements had been ellipted or not.

## 5.2 Arabic terms used to denote ellipsis

### 5.2.1 *ḥadhf*

*ḥadhf* is the most common term used in traditional Arabic linguistics to refer to the ellipsis of a word of a sentence (cf. Carter 1991: 123 ). The term *ḥadhf* is also used to denote the omission of one of the letters constituting a word. For example, *wâw* at the end of the imperfect verb *yad'û* is ellipted if it is preceded by an apocopative particle (*adât jazm*). It becomes *lam yad'-u*, etc. However, analysis and discussion of these issues are beyond the scope of this study, which is mainly concerned with the ellipsis of an element of a sentence. Ellipsis at the sentence level is distinguished from other types of omission by the condition of recoverability. The basic principle of ellipsis is that nothing can be omitted unless it can be recovered from the preceding elements.

### 5.2.2 *idmâr*

*idmâr* is the second term used in Arabic linguistics to denote ellipsis. Ibrahîm (1975: 1) differentiates between *ḥadhf* and *idmâr* thus:

*al ḥadhf-u lughat-an isqât-u shay-in min al-kalâm-i ism-an aw fi 'l-an  
aw ḥarf-an aw jumlah... .. wa idhâ usqîta shay'-un min al-kalâm-i wa  
baqia atharuh summia idmâr-an*

The literal meaning of the word *ḥadhf* is the ellipsis of an element of speech, for example the ellipsis of the noun or the verb or the particle or clause. However, if an element is deleted from a sentence but its influence remains, then this is called *idmâr*.

To illustrate this point one may cite the following examples:

*Zayd-un sâfara*  
Zayd has travelled.

*man al-musâfir-u? Zayd-un*  
Who is traveling?.....Zayd

Arab linguists argue that the subject of the verb *sâfara* in the first example is *mudmar*, which has been ellipted; they use the term *idmâr* in this case and not *ḥadhf* to refer to this process. However, the subject of the nominal sentence (*mubtada'*) in the second example is *maḥdhûf* and not *mudmar* (cf. al-Hroot 1987: 26–27). Nevertheless, Arab linguists sometimes use the terms *ḥadhf* and *idmar* to mean the same thing (cf. Sibawayh 1975 vol. 1, p. 257) to the extent that the reader can sometimes hardly detect any difference between them except in cases where the subject is ellipted, as in the second example above. They all agree that the term *idmâr* and not *ḥadhf* should be used in this case.

### 5.2.3 *taqdîr*

Arab linguists use the term *taqdîr* to refer to the process of deducing an element ellipted from a sentence, as the following example indicates:

*u-ḥibb-u abî*  
I love my father

Here the assumed structure of the sentence is:

*u-ḥibb-u [anâ] abî*

where the word *anâ* (I) is the assumed element (*muqaddar*). The process by which this word, and others, is deduced is called *taqdîr* (assumption) (cf. Gruntfest 1984: 234).

## 5.3 Recoverability

Recoverability is the essential condition put forward by Arab grammarians for ellipsis. Ellipsis is not allowed if there are no indicators to help the addressee to identify the ellipted elements.<sup>1</sup>

Arab grammarians apply the theory of government (*'amal*) to elliptical sentences believing that this theory helps in identifying the ellipted elements. It is very common for grammarians to argue that governing words (*'awâmil*) are ellipted from sentences, but their influence on the remaining elements remains clear (cf.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Hishâm argues that there are seven other conditions under which ellipsis may take place (see Appendix 2). These conditions are discussed in this chapter.

Ibn Hishâm [n. d.] vol. 2, p. 609; Ibn al-Hâjj 1986: 35; Chapter Four). Consider the following example:

*al-asad-a*

The lion

In such cases the word is in the accusative, and grammarians assume that the governing word that caused the word to be accusative is ellipted, and that the assumed sentence should be:

*ihdhar al-asad-a*

Beware of the lion.

Arabic grammar does not only depend on the theory of government, but also on the circumstances in which elliptical sentences were uttered or written.

Let us examine Ibn Jinni's statement (1957 vol. 2, p. 360):

*qad hadhafat al-'arab-u al-jumlah wa al-mufrad wa al-ḥarf wa al-ḥarakah wa laysa shay'-un min dhâlika illâ 'an dalîl-in 'alayh wa illâ kâna fih ḍarb-un min taklîf 'ilm al-ghayb fî ma'rifatih*

The Arabs have practised ellipsis of sentences, single words, particles and short vowels, and they have left an indication of them. Otherwise people would have needed to resort to supernatural knowledge to identify them.

By the word *dalîl* (indicator) Ibn Jinni means what can be understood from the elliptical sentence in the form in which it is uttered or, as a corollary, everything that helps the addressee to identify the ellipted element, whether by its grammatical function in the sentence or by general grammatical rules, or by the circumstances in which the elliptical sentence was uttered or written (cf. Ali 1988: 603).

A similar point of view is expressed by Ibn al-Sarrâj (1987 vol. 2, p. 254) when he writes:

*i'lam anna jamî'-a mâ yuḥdhaf fa innahum lâ yaḥdhifûna shay'-an illâ wa fi mâ abqaw dalîl-un 'alâ mâ alqaw*

Know that nothing can be ellipted unless the sentence that remains contains an indicator of what has been ellipted.

Ibn Hishâm explained the issue of recoverability more elaborately than Ibn Jinnî and Ibn al-Sarrâj. This may be because he lived at a later era than these two scholars and so felt that he had to add to their pronouncements, as the following statement explains:

*tanbîhân: aḥadahumâ anna dalîl al-ḥadhf naw'ân aḥadahumâ ḡhayr ṣinâ'î wa yanqasim-u ilâ ḥâlî wa maqâlî ... wa al-thânî ṣinâ'î wa ḥâdhâ yakhtaṣ-u bi-ma'rifatih al-naḥwiyyûn*

Two cautions: first, the indicator of ellipsis is of two types. One *ḡhayr ṣinâ'î* (non-grammatical), consists of *ḥâlî* (situational) and *maqâlî*



(expressed) ... the second is *sinâ'î* (grammatical) and only grammarians will know about this.

### 5.3.1 Verbal indicators of ellipsis (*qarâ'in lafziyyah*)

Arab grammarians use the term *qarâ'in lafziyyah* to refer to ways in which the pronunciation of the sentence affords means by which the ellipped elements may be identified. These means include the following.

#### 1. INTONATION

Intonation is a phenomenon that is concerned with the way in which the listener is able to estimate the ellipped elements from the manner in which a sentence is spoken. The Arabic grammatical theory gives intonation a special importance because it helps the listener to identify ellipped element(s). The Arabic grammatical theory was intent to treat intonation as one of the most important aspects of sentence analysis because it relates grammatical meanings to the intentions of the speaker. In other words, it explains the differences between a verbal and a non-verbal sentence and how the speaker organises the elements in the spoken sentence.

Semantic relationships between different elements can be changed through intonation. This does not so much change the basic grammatical analysis of sentence structures. Rather, it gives another aspect with regard to the awareness of the semantic relations between different sentential elements.

This means that early Arabic grammatical theory sometimes deals with more than grammatical correctness. The Arabic theory distinguishes between the original pronunciation of the sentence and the other alternative ways of pronunciation. It assumes that each way is associated with an added meaning to the sentence. The alteration of original pronunciation results in different meanings. Language users select from among a number of options that are granted by grammar to express meaning. Arab grammarians maintain that the view that two sentences with two different pronunciations have the same meaning is fallacy, since intonation requires consideration of the intention of the speaker (cf. 4.7.5).

The ellipted element may be recovered by considering intonation. This is because the spoken sentence is best analysed through intonation. If one thinks of the role of intonation and how it is associated with grammatical meanings, then one would realise the existence of several meanings for one sentence (Lobeck 1995; Amaireh 1984: 171-174).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The western term (intonation) has a number of different Arabic translation. Arab linguists offer the following terms: *naghmah*, *nabr* and *tanghim* (cf. 4.7.5; Amaireh 1984: 171-172).

It should be noted that in this case one does not ignore the social context in which the sentence is spoken, but priority in this case should be given to the way in which the sentence is pronounced, because the hearer depends on this to determine the ellipped element.<sup>1</sup>

The role played by intonation in determining the ellipped elements is to a large extent similar to the role it plays in determining the type of the sentence whether informative (*khabariyyah*) or interrogative (*istifhâmiyyah*).

Arab linguists did not restrict themselves to analysing written sentences, but concentrated also on the pronunciation of each individual sentence. This is reflected in the interest they showed in the various Qur'ânic readings. It appears that Ibn Hishâm did not concentrate on the role of intonation, believing that Ibn Jinnî had thoroughly explained this issue (cf. below, 5.7 Hammûdah 1983).

## 2. PAUSING

Pausing is considered useful in traditional Arabic grammar in identifying the element(s) ellipped from a sentence. Consider the following example:

<i>marart-u</i>	<i>bi Zayd -in</i>	<i>al- karîm-u</i>
passed-I-nom	beside Zayd-gen	def-generous-nom

I passed the generous Zayd.

---

<sup>1</sup> It is unlikely that modern linguistics would regard this kind of sentence as displaying ellipsis. In modern linguistics the concept of ellipsis differs from that of traditional Arabic linguistics (cf. Lobeck 1995).

I passed the generous Zayd.

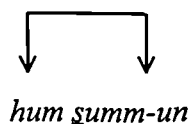
The word *al-karîm-u* is in the nominative because it is a predicate of an ellipted *mubtada'* assumed as *huwa* (he). This is extremely difficult to identify unless one examines carefully the way in which the sentence has been spoken (cf. Ibn al-Hâjj 1986: 29).

Pausing is considered by Arab linguists to be one of the most important elements which must be present in order for the meaning to be gauged, and it also help to identify the functions of elements. Consider the Qur'ânic verse (2, 18):

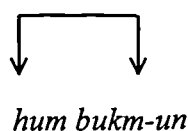
*summ-un, bukm-un, 'umy-un fahum lâ yarji 'ûn*

Deaf, dumb and blind, they will not return [to the path].

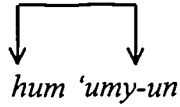
If the reader pauses after the word *summ-un*, then again after the word *bukm-un*, and then again after the word *'umy-un*, these nouns will be considered to function as predicates which have to have assumed subjects, and the assumed structure of the clauses will be:



*hum summ-un*



*hum bukm-un*



Cf. below, 5.4.8; Hammûdah 1983: 106.

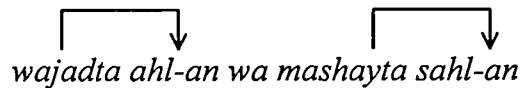
### 3. PARSING SINGS *i'râb*

Parsing sings give an indication of some of the ellipted elements. If a word conveys the meaning of the sentence and is in the accusative for example, a governing word must be assumed, as in:

*ahl-an wa sahl-an*  
kin-acc. and flat-acc.

You are very welcome

Here, the assumed structure of the sentence is:

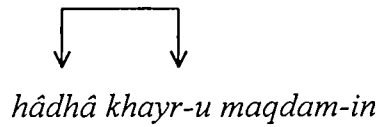


You have found kin and walked a flat road.

The verbs, however, have been ellipted for the sake of brevity. In this case the ellipted element is assumed to be a verb because the two nouns are governed in the accusative (cf. Hâtûm 1992: 31–55). There are, however, instances in which the assumed element is governed in the nominative, as in:

*khayr-u maqdam-in*  
good-nom coming-gen

The assumed structure of this sentence is:



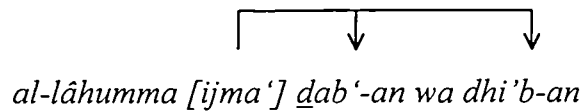
In this case the ellipted element *hâdhâ* (this) functions as a *mubtada'* (subject of the nominal sentence).

In the expression

*al-lâhumma dab '-an wa dhi 'b-an*

May God a hyena and a wolf

the assumed structure is



May God gather a hyena and a wolf.

where the two nouns in the accusative are governed by an ellipted verb(cf. Hammûdah 1983).

### 5.3.2 Situational indicators of ellipsis (*qarâ'in hâliyyah*)

The term *qarâ'in hâliyyah* in Arabic grammar is used to denote the circumstances in which sentences were spoken or written. Arabic grammar assumes that in certain cases it is possible to use elliptical sentences because the surrounding

circumstances can help the addressee to guess the ellipted element easily.<sup>1</sup>

Consider the following example:

*al-kitab-a*  
the book-acc.

If this word is spoken and there is a book lying nearby on a table and the speaker is addressing a friend sitting beside that table, then the meaning will be:

*a' ṭinî al-kitâb-a*

Give me the book

The verb *a' ṭinî* is ellipted because it is easily understood from the context in which the word *al-kitâb-a* is spoken. The following are further examples of sentences in which, according to Arab grammarians, an ellipted element is indicated by a *dalîl ḥâlî* (situational indicator):

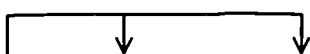
*qudûm-an sa'îd-an*  
return-acc. happy-acc.

Happy return

If this sentence were spoken to someone who had just returned from travel, its assumed form would be:

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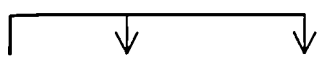
<sup>1</sup> *al-Qarâ'in al-ḥâliyyah* (situational indicators) are sometimes referred to as *al-Qarâ'in al-'aqliyyah* (mental indicators) see Ibrâhîm (1975: 12).

  
*qadimta qudûm-an sa'îd-an*  
 Your arrival is a happy occasion.

Here is another example:

*râshid-an mahdiyy-an*  
 God show you the right way

If this sentence were to be spoken to someone who was preparing himself for travel, its complete form would be:

  
*idhhab râshid-an mahdiyy-an*  
 Go! God show you the right way

The following table shows how Arabic linguistic theory conceives the relationship between speaker and addressee and in particular the importance of situational indicators in helping to convey meaning.

Speaker	← situational indicators ←	Addressee
	→ elliptical sentences →	
	→ situational indicators →	

The normal rules that govern the form of sentences can be overlooked through the processes of ellipsis depending on a situation that



make the elliptical sentence sufficiently informative. The emphasis on the context in which the sentence is used and the relationship that exists between the speaker and the addressee indicates the pragmatic orientation of Arabic scholars. This device can sometimes be overruled by grammarians but rhetoricians who came later developed this concept as one of the essential approaches to sentence analysis (cf. Chapter Five).

Sibawayh (1975 vol. 2, p. 130) has commented on the situational indicators as follows:

*wa dhâlika annaka ra'ayta sûrat-a shakhṣ-in fa sâra âyat-an laka 'alâ ma'rifat-i al-shakhṣ faqulta 'Abdullâh wa rabbî ka'nnaka qulta dhâka 'Abdullah aw hâdhâ 'Abdullah aw sami'ta sawt-an fa'arafta sâhib-a al-sawt faṣâra âyat-an laka 'alâ ma'rifatih faqulta Zayd-un wa rabbî aw masasta jasad-an aw shamamta rîḥ-an faqulta Zayd-un aw al-misk-u aw dhuqta ta'âm-an faqulta al'asal-u*

If you see a person and you say *'Abdullâhi wa rabbî* (Abdullah, by God) then this is the same as saying *dhâka 'Abdullâhi* or *hâdhâ 'Abdullâh* (This is Abdullah or that is Abdullah). Likewise if you hear a voice and you recognise whose voice it is and you say *Zayd-un wa rabbî* (Zayd, by God), or you touch a body or smell the scent of something and you say *Zayd-un* or *al-misk-u* (the musk) or you taste some food and you say *al-'asal-u* (the honey).

Sibawayh wishes to stress that all five senses are used to deduce the ellipted element and its function in the sentence, as the following table shows:

SENSE	ELLIPTED SENTENCE	ASSUMED SENTENCE
SIGHT	<i>'Abdullâh wa rabbî</i> 'Abdullah, by God	<i>hâdhâ 'Abdullâh wa rabbî</i> This is 'Abdullah, by God
HEARING	<i>Zayd-un wa rabbî</i> Zayd by God	<i>hâdhâ Zayd-un wa rabbî</i> This is Zayd, by God
TOUCH	<i>Zayd-un</i>	<i>hâdhâ Zayd-un</i> This is Zayd
SMELL	<i>al-misk-u</i> the musk	<i>hâdhâ al-misk-u</i> This is the musk
TASTE	<i>al-'asal-u</i> the honey	<i>hâdhâ al-'asal-u</i> This is the honey

(Cf. Hammûdah 1983: 117; Yâqût 1985: 222)

Arabic grammatical theory emphasises that speakers often delete many elements from the sentence because these can be understood from the situation without the need to mention them. However, if these sentences were to be abstracted from their contexts, then understanding them would become extremely difficult if not impossible. In this case ellipsis is not allowed (cf. Hammûdah 1983: 116).

The founders of Arabic linguistics recognised the importance of the situational indicators in aiding understanding of the meaning of sentences and made important remarks, though scattered, in this connection. Consider the following examples:

*bi-ism-i allâh-i*

In the name of God

The start of some action is considered to be one of the situational indicators, and for this reason an ellipped verb is assumed in this example. If what is meant is the start of the reading, the ellipped verb is assumed to be *aqra'-u* (I read), and if what is meant is the start of eating, then it is assumed to be *âkul-u* (I eat), and so forth.

Here is another example from the Qur'ân (5, 3):

*hurrimat 'alaykum al-maytat-u wa al-dam-u*  
Forbidden to you [for food] are dead meat and blood.

Understanding the meaning of this sentence demands an understanding of what is ellipped. It should be understood that the prohibition does not fall on *al-maytat-u* (dead animal, slaughtered) or *al-dam-u* (blood) *per se*. Instead prohibition is to be associated with the action of human beings and not the things themselves. Therefore it is assumed that the verse implies some ellipsis, and accordingly the assumed structure of the sentence should be (cf. Hammûdah 1983): | 1 8 - 1 1 9 ) .

*hurrimat 'alaykum akl-u al-maytah wa shurb al-dam*

Forbidden to you eating dead meat and drinking blood.

#### 5.4 Rules for the assumption of ellipped elements

Estimation of the element(s) ellipped from a sentence is a subject that has been addressed thoroughly by Arab grammarians. Reviewing this literature one can argue that their method for estimating the ellipped element(s) demands that the accurate meaning of the sentence should be taken into account, and secondly that

the sentence should observe what they call *sinâ'ah nahwiyyah* (grammatical rules), by which is meant general grammatical rules (cf. Gully 1991: 161). The rules for the assumption of ellipped elements put forward by Arab grammarians include the following.


#### 5.4.1 The location of the ellipped element

The ellipped element must be assumed in its correct location because any mistake here may result in major alterations to the meaning of the sentence, or may require an assumption of a different element that has a different function. For instance, in the example

*Zayd-an darabtuh-u*

I hit Zayd

a verb must be assumed to cause the accusative in *Zayd-an*, and this verb should be placed before the word *Zayd-an*, because if it came after it would not govern the word *Zayd* in the accusative. Therefore, the assumed structure of the sentence should read:


  
*darabt-u Zayd-an darabtuh-u*

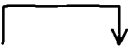
(Cf. Ibn Hishâm vol. 2, p. 613; Ibrâhim 1975; Hammûdah 1983).

However, Arab grammarians sometimes relax this condition if there is a logical need to do so. This may be illustrated by the following example:

*bi-ism-i Allâh-i al-Raḥmân-i al-Raḥîm-i*

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Arab grammarians argue that the preposition causing the genitive and the noun governed in the genitive in this example (i.e. *bi-ismi*) must be associated with a verb, which must always come before the preposition and the noun governed in the genitive. Hence the assumed structure of this example should be as follows:

  
*abda'-u bi-ismi Allâhi al-Raḥmâni al-Raḥîm*

I begin in the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

However, in this example the original position of the assumed verb, which is *abda'-u*, has been changed and placed after the noun governed in the genitive *bi-ism*. This has been done for a logical reason, because the person who believes in God should always privilege His name as a mark of respect. Hence the assumed structure of the sentence should be as follows (cf. Hammûdah 1983): *ii 8*).

  
*... bi-ismi Allâhi al-Raḥmâni al-Raḥîm abda'-u*

#### 5.4.2 The number of ellipted elements

The number of assumed elements to be ellipted from the sentence must be kept to a minimum. This is because Arab linguists believe that in principle there should be no ellipsis (cf. Chapter Three). The fewer the ellipted elements, the more the

structure approaches the original one, and conversely, the greater the number of the elements ellipted from the structure, the less it resembles the original one.

This rule may be explained by the following example:

*anta minnî farsakhân*  
you-acc. from me league-du.

You are two league from me.

Al-Akhfash argues that the assumed structure of this example should be:

*bu'duka minnî farsakhayn*  
your distance. acc. from me league-du.

You are two leagues from me.

But the annexed element (*mudâf*) (i.e. the word *bu'd*) has been ellipted. Al-Fârisî, on the other hand, believes that the assumed structure of the example is:

*anta minnî dhû masâfat-i farsakhayn*  
you-acc. from me having distance league-du

You are two league from me

The majority of Arab linguists accept Al-Akhfash's assumption and reject al-Fârisî's, because al-Fârisî assumes a larger number of ellipted elements, namely the words *dhû* (having) and *masâfat-i* (distance) (cf. Ibn Hishâm vol. 2, p. 615; Ibrâhim; 1975; Hammûdah 1983).

### 5.4.3 Priority in the assumption of ellipted elements

Arab grammarians have given priority to the assumption of certain elements before others. If the sentence implies that the ellipted element may be one of two elements, a subject (*mubtada'*) or a predicate (*khabar*), which elements should be ellipted and which retained? There is no definite answer to this question, because there may be some indicators which point to one assumption rather than the other, or the arguments for and against each assumption may have equal strength, in which case the dispute over the estimation of the ellipted element will remain unresolved. If however, there is an indication to help in the estimation of the ellipted element, then there is no place for dispute. The following example illustrates this:

*yamîn-u Allâh-i*  
oath-nom God-gen

By God !

In this oath-sentence there is no indication of whether the word *yamîn-u* is a subject (*mubtada'*) or a predicate (*khabar*). Arab grammarians argue that both assumptions are to be treated as correct. Hence, if we consider the ellipted element as a subject, the assumed structure of the sentence will be:

*yamîn-u Allâh-i qasamî*  
oath-nom God-gen swear-me

I swear By God !

If, however, we consider the ellipted element to be a predicate, then the assumed structure of the sentence will be:

*qasamî yamîn-u Allâh-i*

swear-me oath-nom God-gen

I swear By God !

However, considering the example

*la-‘amr-u Allâh-i*  
by life-nom God-gen

By the Eternal God

we find that there is an indication in the example to help us in the assumption of the ellipted element, which is the *la* before the word *‘amr*. According to the rules agreed upon by Arab linguists, this *l* comes before the subject. This implies that the ellipted element in this example is the predicate, and hence the assumed structure of the sentence must be:

*la-‘amr-u Allâh-i qasam-i*  
by life-nom God-gen swear-me

By the eternal God

(cf. Ibrâhim 1975; Hammûdah 1983; Ibn al-Hâjj 1986)

#### 5.4.4 Ellipsis and emphasis

Grammarians argue that the main purpose of ellipsis is to make the sentence shorter. Hence, assuming ellipted element should not undermine this aim. In this context Ibn Jinni (1957 vol. 1, p. 289) writes:

*kull-u mâ hudhifa takhfîf-an fa-lâ yajûz-u tawkîduh-u litadâfu‘ hâlayh  
bihi min haythu al-tawkîd li al-ishâb wa al-itnâb wa-al-hadhîf li al-  
ikhtisâr wa-al-ijâz*



No element that has been ellipted to shorten the sentence can be made emphatic. This is because of the contradiction that exists between emphasis, which is mainly for making sentences more informative, and ellipsis, whose purpose is to make sentences neater and shorter.

This view is also shared by Ibn Hishâm (vol. 1, p. 122), who argues that in the example:

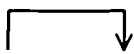
*alladhî darabt-u Zayd-an*

we cannot have

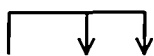
*alladhî darabt-u nafsah-u Zayd-un*

The one I hit was Zayd

The word *nafsah-u* (himself) in this case emphasises an ellipted element which is the pronoun *h*, because the assumed structure of the sentence is:

  
*alladhî darabt-u-h-u nafsah-u Zayd-un*

Another example is the following:

  
*darabt-u darb-an*

Here the governing word (*'âmil*), which is the verb *daraba*, cannot be ellipted because it is corroborated by the absolute object *darb-an* for the sake of emphasis.

(Hammûdah 1983: 124 -125).

### 5.4.5 Abbreviated elements cannot be ellipted

Arab grammarians mean by the phrase *kalimât mukhtaṣarah* (abbreviated words) the particles *hurûf* and nominal verbs *asmâ' af'âl*. Grammarians consider the nominal verb *dûnaka* in the example

*dûnak -a      al-kitâb-a*  
in front of-acc. the book-acc.

Give me the book


to be a short form of the verb *a'tinî* (give me), and hence one cannot ellipt the nominal verb *dûnaka*. Also, in the example

*al-kitâb-a*  
The book-acc.

which is in the accusative, the ellipted element must be the verb itself and not a nominal verb.

Similarly, the ellipsis of particles cannot be taken to be a general grammatical rule, because particles are brought into the structure with the purpose of shortening it, and subsequently deleting them would result in further shortening them.

Consider the following example:

  
*qâma al-qawm-u illâ Zayd-an*

People stood up, except Zayd.

Here the particle *illâ* is a short form of the verb *astathnî* (I except), and as such it cannot be ellipted (cf. Ibn Hishâm vol. 2 p. 609; Owens 1988: 190–191).

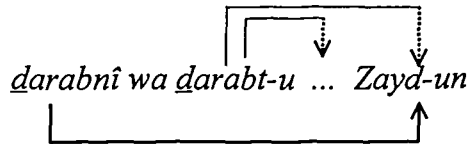
### 5.4.6 Ellipsis should not prevent the governing word being operative

Ellipsis should not prevent the governing word (*‘âmil*) from carrying out its function, as in the sentence:

*darabanî wa darabtuh-u Zayd-un*

Zayd hit me and I hit him

It is not permitted to ellipst the second direct object, which is the pronoun (*h*): that is, it is ungrammatical to say



because the ellipsis of the direct object in this case means that the governing element, which is the transitive verb *darab*, is set to govern the direct object in the accusative, which is the noun *Zayd-un*. But it was prevented from carrying out this function because the noun *Zayd-un* is used as a subject of the first verb, *darabanî* (cf. Ibn Hishâm vol. 2 p. 610; Ibn Al-Sarrâj 1987: vol. 2 p. 315).

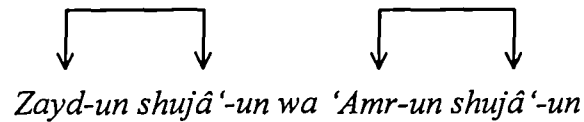
### 5.4.7 Ellipsis from the second sentence

Ellipsis from the second sentence (*jumlaḥ*) takes precedence over ellipsis from the first. This is because the first usually contains indicators of the elements ellipst from the second, as in the following example:

*Zayd-un shujâ'-un wa 'Amr-un*  
 Zayd-nom. brave-nom. and 'Amr-nom.

Zayd is brave and so is 'Amr

Here the noun *'Amr-un* is in the nominative because it is a subject whose predicate is ellipted since there is an indication of it in the first sentence. The assumed sentence structure is:



Grammarians argue that the practice of deleting an element from the second sentence because of its presence in the first is the commonest one, and that the opposite (i.e. the ellipsis of an element from the first sentence because it has been mentioned in the second) is very rare. They quote the following line of poetry as an example of this type of ellipsis:

*naḥn-u bi-mâ 'indanâ wa anta bi-mâ*

*'indaka râḍ-in wa al-ra'y-u mukhtalif-u'*

We are happy with what we have and you are

happy with what you have and our opinions are different

Here the predicate *râḍûna* is ellipted from the first sentence because of the presence in the second sentence of the word *râḍûna* which resembles it (cf. Al-Anbârî 1945: 65; Ibrâhîm 1975: 45).

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<sup>1</sup> Sibawayh (1975 vol. 1, p. 75) claims that this line was said by Qays Ibn al-Khuṭaym while al-Anbârî (1945: 65) attributes it to Dirham al-Anṣârî.

### 5.4.8 Implicit relations are not always due to ellipsis

The above discussion shows how Arabic grammatical theory resorts to assuming ellipted elements from the sentence to explain relationships between the elements in the sentence. However, this is not the only way to explain the relationships between the elements in the sentence. The other way to achieve this goal is to demonstrate a resemblance that exists between one element functioning as part of the sentence and another element not in the sentence. Consider the following examples:

#### EXAMPLE 1

*Zayd-un dârib-un ‘Amr-an*

Zayd is going to hit ‘Amr

The word *‘Amr-an* in this case is functioning as a direct object and because this sentence has no verb, the first thing that comes to mind is that Arabic grammatical theory would assume an ellipted verb to produce the accusative in the direct object, but it does not do that. This is because even though the word *dârib-un* is considered a noun, it is derived from the verb *daraba* (to hit). Thus it is capable of producing the accusative in the direct object without the need to assume an ellipted verb (cf. Chapter Four).

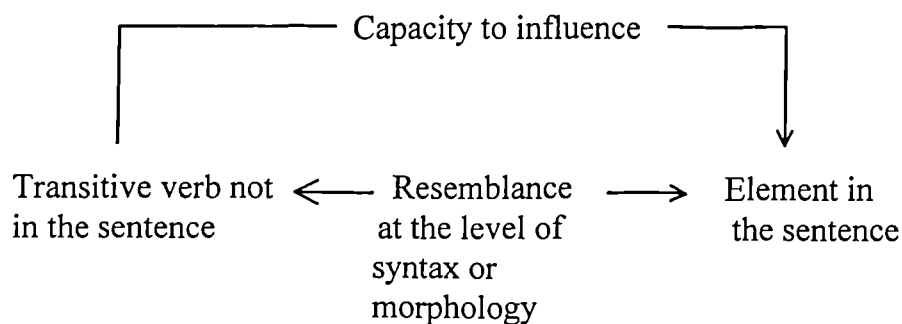
#### EXAMPLE 2

*safiha nafsah*

Debased his soul

This sentence contains a direct object, which is the word *nafsah* (himself), but it does not contain a transitive verb to produce the accusative in this direct object. The only verb in the sentence is *safiha* (to debase), which is an intransitive verb. Arabic grammatical theory assumes that the verb *safiha* in this case bear the meaning of the verb *ahlaka* (to destroy); it performs its functions and hence there is no need in this case to assume an ellipted verb.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, if the sentence contains an element that resembles a verb, the element in question becomes the governing word and there is no need to assume an ellipted element. The resemblance between this element and the transitive verb could be at the level of syntax or morphology.




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<sup>1</sup> For a similar discussion see Owens (1988: 194–195)

### 5.4.9 Ellipsis leads to a change in the functions of elements

In the above sections, the discussion was confined to sentences having ellipted element(s) with the remaining elements fulfilling their normal functions in the sentence. However, Arabic grammatical theory assumes that the process of ellipsis may sometimes influence the other elements in the sentence and lead to a change in the functions these elements perform in the sentence, as the following example illustrates:

*daraba Zayd-un ‘Amr-an*

Zayd hit ‘Amr

This is a sentence in the active voice, but if one wishes to make it passive it becomes:

*duriba ‘Amr-un*

‘Amr was hit

Here, the parsing sign of the word *‘Amr* has changed from the accusative to the nominative. Arabic grammatical theory maintains that the reason for this is that in the active sentence the word *Zayd* was playing the role of *musnad ilayh* (correlative of an attribute), and this is a principal element that cannot be ellipted (cf. Chapter Three; Hammûdah 1983: 122–123). However, when it was ellipted in the second example, the word *‘Amr* was substituted for the word *Zayd* and functioned as a *musnad ilayh*, and this is the reason why its parsing sign has changed.

A good example of this is the following Qur’ânic verse:

*wa is'al al qaryah*

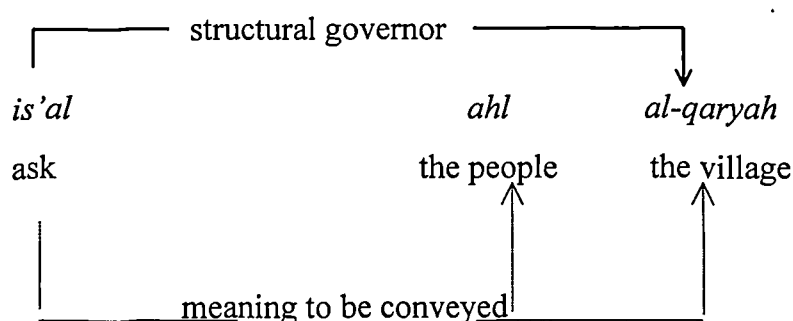
and ask the village

The word *al-qaryah* (the village) is governed in the accusative and the verb *is'al* (ask) is the governing element in the sentence. Hence there is no need to assume an ellipped governing element. However, there is a semantic problem here because the verb *is'al* cannot semantically be applied to the word *al-qaryah*. To avoid this semantic problem, an ellipped governing element must be assumed, to make the structure of the sentence read

*is'al ahl-a al-qaryah*

where the word *ahl* is the direct object and is governed in the accusative. This is because the word *ahl* best serves the meaning, and as such is suitable to be the direct object of the verb (*is'al*), but when it is ellipped, it is replaced by the word *al-qaryah* and its parsing sign changes from the nominative to the accusative. This is because the transitive verb is a strong governing element that influences the direct object and the noun that occupies its place (cf. Owens 1988:191; Abd al-Muttalib 1994: 313). The diagram below indicates the replacement of the semantic object by the structural object.





#### 5.4.10 Ellipted elements may not be expressed

Arabic grammar assumes that some sentences must have some elements ellipted from them, which may function as *musnad*, *musnad ilayh* or *faḍlah*. These ellipted elements cannot be expressed in any way, since if that were to happen the sentences would become ungrammatical. Six examples of this are discussed below.

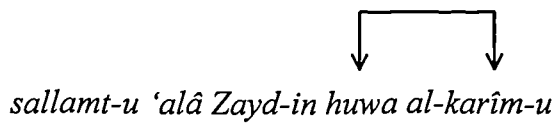
##### EXAMPLE 1

*sallamt-u 'alâ Zayd-in al-karîm-u*

I greeted Zayd the generous

In this example, the word *al-karîm-u* (generous) is governed in the nominative and is unsuitable for acting as an adjective (*sifah*) to the word *Zayd*, which is in the genitive. This is because the general grammatical rule says that the adjective must agree with the word it describes in terms of case ending. Hence, faced with this dilemma grammarians had no option but to assume an ellipted element to

fulfill the function of the *mubtada'*, the word *karīm-u* being the *khavar* to that *mubtada'*. Thus the assumed structure of the sentence becomes:



I greeted Zayd who is the generous.

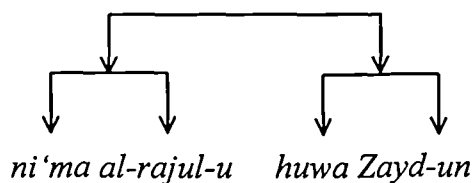
(Cf. Hasan 1974 vol. 1, p. 511; Owens 1988: 193.)

#### EXAMPLE 2

*ni'ma al-rajul-u Zayd-un*

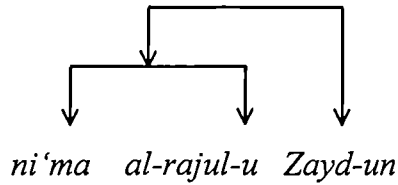
What a nice man Zayd is

In this example, the word *ni'ma* is a verb and the word *al-rajul-u* is the subject of this verb, while the word *Zayd-un*, coming immediately after the word *al-rajul-u*, is governed in the nominative. Grammarians could find no logical way of knowing the function of the word *Zayd* in this structure except to assume that it is a predicate (*khavar*) for a compulsorily ellipsed *mubtada'*, whose estimation is *huwa*. Thus, the assumed structure of the sentence would be:



Hammudah (1983: 184), however, argues that the assumption of an ellipsed subject in the example above is not justifiable, because the sentence *ni'ma al-*

*rajul-u* can be regarded as a fronted predicate (*khavar muqaddam*) and the word *Zayd* as a backed subject (*mubtada' mu'akkhar*):



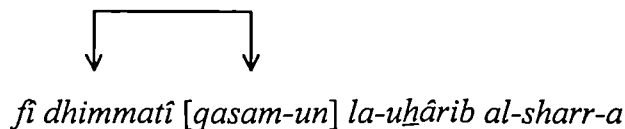
Although this argument seems to be logical, it appears that the main reason behind the grammarians' assumption of an ellipsed element is the fact that the laudatory style (*uslûb al-madh*) requires some sort of emphasis, and the structure which grammarians had advocated carries this emphasis.

### EXAMPLE 3

*fî dhimmatî la-uhârib al-sharr-a*

By God I will fight the bad.

The clause *fî dhimmatî* in this case functions as a predicate (*khavar*) and this *khavar* must have a subject (*mubtada'*) but none of the expressed elements in the structure is suitable to function as a *mubtada'*. Hence it is necessary to assume a compulsorily ellipsed *mubtada'*. The assumed structure of the sentence would be:



By God [swear] I will fight the bad.

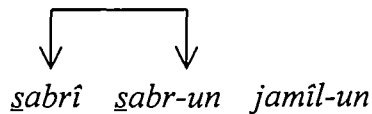
Cf. Ibn 'Aqîl 175 vol. 1, p. 252; Hasan 1974 vol. 1, p. 513.

## EXAMPLE 4

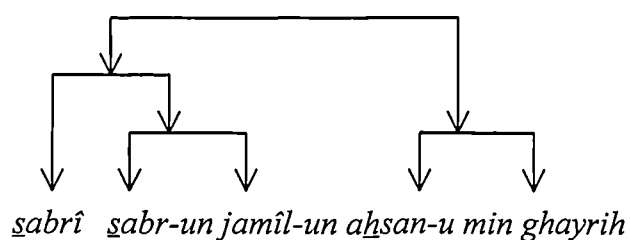
*ṣabr-un jamîl-un*

Patience is fitting

Neither of the two expressed elements in this example, *ṣabr-un* and *jamîl-un*, is suitable to function as a subject because they are both undefined nouns, whereas the subject must always be a defined noun or a specified indeterminate noun (see Chapter Three). For this reason one must assume in this case a ellipted subject *mubtada'*. Thus, the assumed structure of the sentence would be:



Alternatively, the two words *ṣabr-un jamîl-un* can be regarded as a specified indeterminate noun functioning as a subject (*mubtada'*). In this case the compulsorily ellipted element will be the predicate (*khavar*) and the assumed structure would be:



My patience is graceful and is better than otherwise.

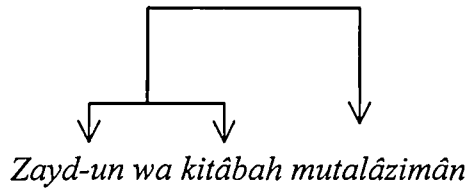
Cf. Ibn 'Aqîl 175 vol. 1, p. 256; Hasan 1974 vol. 1, p. 514.

### EXAMPLE 5

*Zayd-un wa kitâbah*

## Zayd and his book

What is meant by this sentence is that Zayd is always accompanied by his book; grammarians call the *wâw* in this case *wâw al-muṣāḥabah* (the *wâw* of accompaniment). The word *Zayd-u* functions as a subject for the nominal sentence (*mubtada'*) but the word *kitâbah* is not suitable to function as a predicate *khabar* because it is in the accusative case. The Baṣrans assume in this case a compulsory ellipted predicate; according to this view the assumed structure of the sentence is:



Zayd and his book are together.

(Cf. Ibn ‘Aqîl 175 vol. 1, p. 256; Hasan 1974 vol. 2, p. 304).

The Kûfans, however, argue that there is no need to assume an ellipted predicate in this case; it is sufficient to keep the *wâw* of accompaniment because this carries the same meaning as the word *mutalâzimân*, and therefore acts in place of a predicate (cf. Hammûdah 1983: 192).

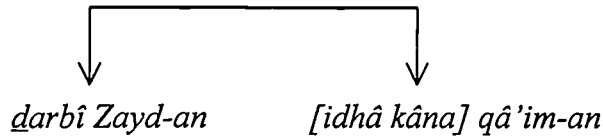
#### EXAMPLE 6

*ḍarbî Zayd-an qâ’im-an*

My hitting Zayd when he is standing.

The word *ḍarbî* in this sentence is the subject. There is no other word in the expressed structure which can be used as a predicate for this subject, because (1) the word Zayd is a direct object governed in the accusative because of the infinitive *ḍarbî* and hence is not suited as a *khavar*; and (2) the word *qâ’im-an* is functioning as *ḥâl* since it is governed in accusative, indicating the situation of Zayd during the beating, and hence it is not suited to function as a *khavar*. For

these reasons one must assume an ellipped predicate, to make the structure read as follows:



I hit Zayd when he was standing up

Here the clause *idhâ kâna* (when he was standing up) is the compulsorily ellipped predicate (cf. Ibn 'Aqîl 175 vol. 1, pp. 253–254).

As will be explained in the next chapter, this type of ellipsis has attracted the attention only of Arab grammarians and has not received the same attention from the rhetoricians. This is probably because of the strong belief of grammarians in the theory of government and its role in the analysis of the elements of the Arabic sentence. This belief led the grammarians to assume a hidden sentence structure which includes all the elements which this theory demands. It is clear that the parsing of every element in the sentence is the prime indicator and the guiding instrument which has led grammarians to assume these ellipped elements.

## 5.5 Exaggeration in the assumption of ellipped elements

Arab grammarians sometimes exaggerate in assuming ellipped elements of a sentence that seem to contradict their general rules. This is because they consider

that there is no way of making these sentences grammatically correct except by assuming element(s) ellipated from those sentences.

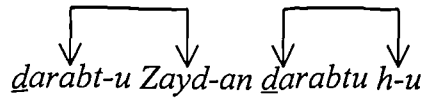
Ibn Hishâm, in his book *Mughnî al-labîb ‘an kutub al-a‘arîb* [n. d.] vol. 2, p. 605, uses the term *adillah sinâ‘iyyah* (artificial indicators) to imply ellipsis of elements from seemingly grammatically incorrect sentences. Ibn Hishâm uses this term to refer to the exaggeration of grammarians in this regard. In fact, grammarians’ assumption of ellipated elements is related to the process of deducing general rules that can be applied to a large number of sentences.

In dealing with the question of exaggeration in estimating ellipated elements one comes across what grammarians call *bâb al-ishtighâl* (lit. the subject of occupation). This is when a verb that should govern a particular element already governs another element as can be illustrated by the following example:

*Zayd-an darabtuh-u*

The principle here is that the verb *daraba* should govern the direct object *Zayd-an* in the accusative case. However, it is prevented from governing *Zayd-an* by the presence of pronoun *h*, which is to be regarded as its object. As a result its influence is confined to this pronoun only. Thus the word *Zayd-an* becomes an influenced (governed) element without a governing element. To rectify this situation, grammarians assume an ellipated-governing verb. Thus the structure of the assumed sentence is:





(Cf. Ibn al-Hājǧ 1986: 35; Owens 1988: 196–197.)

Grammarians insist that the first verb *daraba* is a verb that must be assumed, but that at the same time it should not be expressed.

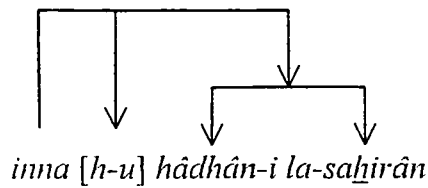
Traditional Arabic grammar books are full of sentences which grammarians consider contain ellipted elements even though the meaning does not require this assumption. In adding more detail to the theory of government (*ʿamal*) in a way that contradicts the basic educational role of grammatical studies, grammarians tend to exaggerate this issue. For this reason, some later grammarians, for example Ibn Maḍāʾ (1988: 76–93), called for the jettisoning of these unnecessary assumptions (cf. above, Chapter Four).

Some of the interpretations which grammarians make for the purpose of elucidating irregular sentences that defy ordinary grammatical rules involve the assumption of certain elements. This can be illustrated by the following Qurʾānic verse:

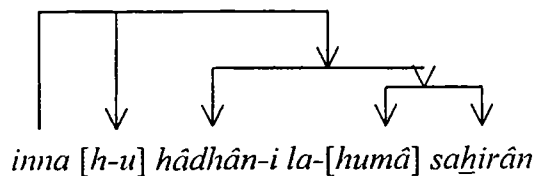
*inna hādhān-i la-sāḥirān*

These two are surely sorcerers.

In this case a pronoun of fact (*ḍamīr al-shaʿn*) is assumed to function as a noun of *inna*, while the rest of the sentence functions as a predicate (*khābar*):



The general grammatical rules of Arabic prohibit the use of the *la* with the predicate, and this means that another ellipted *mubtada'* (subject), which is *humâ*, must be assumed and must be placed after the *la*, whose predicate is *sâḥirân*, so that the assumed structure of the sentence would read:



Obviously this looks unnecessary, however, as the meaning of the sentence is quite clear without these two assumed elements (cf. Hammûdah 1983: 110-111; Bloch 1990).

Ibn Maḍâ' al-Qurṭubî (1988: 90–93) criticises the assumption of ellipted elements which are unnecessary for an understanding of the meaning of the sentence. He strongly concentrated his criticism on the theory of government (*'amal*) and tries to discredit it (cf. Chapter Four).

It can be argued that the lack of harmony between the traditional Arabic grammatical assumption and the correct meaning of the sentence by and large,

represents some deficiency in the grammatical rules in relation to ellipsis. Hammûdah (1983: 114) thinks that this what has led Ibn Jinni (1957 vol. 1, p. 284) to conclude:

*idhâ kâna taqdîr al-i'râb mukhâlîf-an li tafsîr al-ma'nâ taqabbalta  
tafsîr al-ma'nâ 'alâ mâ huwa 'alayh wa sahhahta tarîq taqdîr al-i'râb*

If you accept the fact that the parsing assumption may not coincide with the meaning, you should accept the meaning as it is and try to correct the parsing assumption.

## 5.6 Reasons for ellipsis

Arab grammarians have offered a number of explanations for ellipsis. One can argue, however, that their explanations are over-rational and do not accord with the nature of the language. The following two examples illustrate the most common reasons they give:

### EXAMPLE 1

*jâ'a al-ladhî huwa dârib-un Zayd-an*  
came-a the who he-a hit-nom. Zayd-acc.

the one who hit Zayd has come

Grammarians argue that if the sentence becomes too long, it becomes monotonous. In this case it is better to use ellipsis to give it some strength. So the above example can be shortened, using ellipsis, to

*jâ'a al-ladhî dârib-un Zayd-an*

which is stronger and more forthright than the first example.

#### EXAMPLE 2

*lawlâ 'Abullah lamâ ji'nâ ilâ hâdhâ al-bayt*  
If Abdullah no come-we to this the house.

If 'Abdullah [had not been here], we would not have come to this house.

Here, the word *Abdullah* functions as a subject and the predicate is ellipted. Arab grammarians argue that the reason for this ellipsis is the overuse of this kind of sentence. They assume that the original structure of the sentence is:

*lawlâ 'Abullah [mawjûd] lamâ ji'nâ ilâ hâdhâ al-bayt*  
If Abdullah [available] no come-we to this the house.

(Cf. Sibawayh 1975: 2, 129.)

### 5.7 Baṣran–Kûfan disputes

Arab grammarians have paid the process of the assumption of ellipted elements special attention. In this area, the dispute between the Baṣran and the Kûfan schools is quite evident. Each school has its own analysis of Arabic sentences, and this has led to differences in estimating the location and the type of ellipted elements. The following examples indicate some of these differences:

## EXAMPLE 1

*mâ ta'âmaka akala illâ Zayd-un*  
 no food-you-acc. ate-acc. except Zayd-nom.

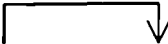
No one ate your food except Zayd

The Kûfans argue that the above example is ungrammatical because *Zayd-un* is not a possible subject of the verb *akala*. In structures like this they assume an ellipped subject, namely the word *aḥad-un*, as in:

*mâ kharaja illâ Hind-u*  
 no went out-acc. except Hind-nom

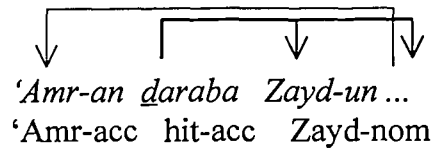
No one went out except Hind

Here, the Kûfans believe that the word *Hind-u* is not the subject. The subject, they say, is the ellipped word *aḥad-un* and the assumed structure of the sentence is:

  
*mâ kharaja aḥad-un illâ Hind-u*

Their evidence for this is the fact that the verb *kharaja* does not have the *tâ* of the feminine attached to it; if *Hind-u* were the true subject it would have this *tâ* attached to it because it is a real feminine.

Returning to the first example in this section, the Baṣrans, on the other hand, argue that *Zayd-un* is the subject, but that the direct object, which is the word *ta'âmaka*, precedes the verb *akala*, as in the example:



Zayd has hit 'Amr

It should be noticed that in the example

*mâ ta 'âmaka akala illâ Zayd-un*

the Kûfans have resorted to the estimation of a ellipted element in support of their argument, while the Baṣrans base their argument on a belief that the word *aḥad-un* is to be assumed in the meaning i. e. it is a (*fâ'il ma'nawî*) though not in the grammar, as in the example

*taṣabbaba Zayd-un 'araq-an*  
swelter-ac Zayd-nom sweat-ac

Sweat was coming from Zayd [like water]

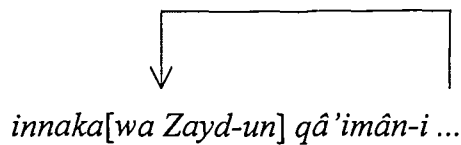
where the word *'araq-an* is the conceptual subject of the sentence, but not the grammatical subject, because it is in the accusative and not in the nominative (cf. Ibn al-Anbârî 1945: 1,113–114).

#### EXAMPLE 2

*innaka wa Zayd-un qâ'imân-i*  
indeed-you-acc. and Zayd-nom. stand-2 nom.

You and Zayd were standing up.

The Baṣrans argue that the structure of the above example is ungrammatical, because in their view it is not permissible to co-ordinate the noun of *inna* with another noun before mentioning the predicate *khavar*:



The Baṣrans reject this analysis because *inna* governs its noun in the accusative but *Zayd-un* in the above example is governed in the nominative. Therefore, if one regards *Zayd-un* as coordinated with the noun of *inna*, which is *ka*, this will lead to a violation of one of the basic rules on which there is total agreement among all grammarians (cf. Ibn Hishâm vol. 1 p. 37). Moreover, if one assumes that the word *Zayd-un* is coordinated to the noun of *inna*, this will lead to the assumption of two governors for the *khavar* i.e. *inna* and the *mubtada'*. Thus:



Grammarians regard the presence of two governors and one governed entity as totally unacceptable (cf. Ibn Hishâm vol. 2, p. 474).

The Kûfans argue that the noun of *inna* can be co-ordinated with another noun before the predicate is mentioned. In support of their argument they cite the following line of poetry:

*wa illâ fa-i 'lamû an-nâ wa antum*  
*bughât-un mâ baqînâ fî shiqâq-i*

You must know both you and us  
are unjust if we continue to disagree

Here, the poet has coordinated the word *antum* and the noun of *inna*, namely *nâ*, before the use of the *khavar* (*bughât-un*). The Baṣrans, however, resort to the assumption of an ellipted predicate (*khavar*). In their view the assumed structure should be as follows:

*wa illâ fa-i 'lamû annâ [bughât-un] wa antum*  
*bughât-un mâ baqînâ fî shiqâq-i*

Their evidence for this assumed *khavar* is the second mentioned *khavar* (cf. Sibawayh 1975: vol. 2 pp. 155–156; Al-Zajjâjî 1983: pp. 44–45; Al-Anbârî 1945: pp. 119–123; Owens 1988: 193–194).

Hence, disagreement remains over what ought and ought not to be assumed in such examples. Arab grammarians assume that some elements have been ellipted whenever there is a contradiction between the apparent structures and their own method of sentence analysis.

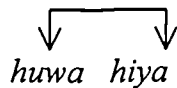


## EXAMPLE 3

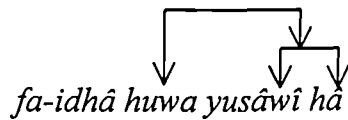
*kunt-u azunn-u anna al-‘aqrab-a ashadd-u las‘-an min al-zunbûr-i  
fa idhâ huwa hiya*

I was thinking that the sting of the scorpion was stronger than wasp,  
but [I found out] that it is [equal] to it

The Baṣrans argue that the above sentence is grammatical because they consider the word *huwa* to be a subject of the nominal sentence (*mubtada‘*) and the word *hiya* to be a predicate (*khabar*).<sup>1</sup>



In this case there is no ellipsis in the sentence. The Kûfans, on the other hand, consider that the sentence is ungrammatical. So an ellipted element must be assumed, and the complete sentence should read:



Thus it can be seen that the Baṣran view is the simpler, and so in most cases Arab grammarians prefer it. (cf. Al-Zajjâjî 1983: 9; Al-Anbârî 1945: 411; Ibn Hishâm vol. 1, p. 88).

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<sup>1</sup> A famous debate on this issue took place between Sibawayh, the leader of the Baṣran school, and al-Kisâ'î, the leader of the Kûfan school, in the presence of the Caliph Hârûn al-Rashîd. For details see Ibn Hishâm, vol. 1, p. 88; al-Anbârî 1945: 411–415; al-Zajjâjî 1983: 9–10.

## EXAMPLE 4

In the Qur'ân (6, 94) we read:

*laqad taqatta 'a baynakum wa dalla 'ankum mâ kuntum taz 'umûn*

So now all relations between you have been cut off, and your [pet] fancies have left you in the lurch.

There are two readings of the word *baynakum* in this verse, one positing the accusative and the other the nominative. It should be mentioned that both these readings have been correctly related (i.e. the honesty and integrity of their narrator has been checked) (cf. Ibn Mujâhid 1980: 263). Hence, given the authentic sources from which these two readings have been quoted, linguists can neither reject them nor describe them as incorrect, because it is agreed by Arab linguists that the Qur'ân in all its readings is acknowledged for its linguistic perfection (cf. Al-Tawîl 1985: 29). Indeed, linguists use it as the yardstick against which other new sentences may be judged.

So far as the second reading is concerned (i.e. the situation where the word *baynakum* is governed in the nominative), both the Baṣran and the Kûfan schools agree that the word *baynakum* in this sentence is governed in the nominative in order to perform the function of the subject (*fâ'il*) in the sentence. Thus, harmony was achieved between the Qur'ânic reading and the grammatical principles.

The reading in which the word *baynakum* is governed in the accusative, however, is a matter of dispute between the Baṣran and the Kûfan schools. Some Baṣran grammarians consider that the reading with the word *baynakum* in the

accusative is ungrammatical because *baynakum* is *ṣilat al-mawṣūl* (relative clause) for an ellipted *ism mawṣūl* (relative pronoun), which is the word *mā* and so the assumed structure of the sentence is

*laqad taqatta'a mā baynakum*

where *mā* is *ism mawṣūl* (a relative pronoun) and *baynakum* is *ṣilat al-mawṣūl* (a relative clause) (cf. al-Zajjāḥī 1983: 110).

The Baṣrans argue that it is impermissible to ellipt the *ism mawṣūl* (relative pronoun) and retain the *ṣilat al-mawṣūl* (relative clause). For this reason they describe the reading in which the word *baynakum* is governed in the accusative as ungrammatical. Obviously, this is a rather strict and uncompromising position. For this reason, and also because it contradicts one of the Qur'ānic readings, Arab linguists have rejected it. It is in any case clearly a dangerous undertaking to question the correctness of a linguistic model around which Arabic grammar rules have been developed, (cf. Ibn Manẓūr 1956 vol. 13, p. 62).

Most Baṣrans adopted a mid way position, preserving the Baṣran school's firm opposition to the ellipsis of the *ṣilat al-mawṣūl* (relative clause) and retaining the *ism al-mawṣūl* (relative pronoun), while at the same time respecting the Qur'ānic reading in which the word *baynakum* is governed in the accusative. They achieved this by assuming an ellipted element, but not *ism mawṣūl*, with the following assumed sentence structure:

*laqad taqatta'a al-amr-u baynakum*

The matter between you have been cut off

Here the ellipted element is the word *al-amr*, which is not a relative pronoun.

The Kûfans, on the other hand, argue that it is possible to ellipt the *ism al-mawṣûl* (relative pronoun) and retain the *ṣilat al-masûl* (relative clause). They cite the following Qur'ânic verse (29, 46) as a proof on which to construct this principle:

*âmannâ bi-alladhî unzila ilaynâ wa unzila ilaykum*

Say we believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you.

Here, the Kûfans argue that the assumed sentence is:

*âmannâ bi-alladhî unzila ilaynâ wa alladhî unzila ilaykum*

The word *alladhî* in the second sentence is a *ism mawṣûl* (relative pronoun) which has been ellipted, but its connection (*ṣilat al-mawṣûl*; i.e. the word *unzila*) has remained (cf. Ibn Hishâm [n. d.] vol. 2, p. 625).

It is clear that on this issue the Baṣrans were the more strict and the more observant of grammatical principles. They were not prepared to abandon these rules, even if they contradicted Qur'ânic readings. Some of them, however, resorted to the assumption of certain ellipted elements to avoid any contradiction that might arise between grammatical principles and the Qur'ânic material.

The Kûfans were more realistic regarding this issue. They were prepared to change some of their grammatical principles and adopt new ones if correct linguistic sentences were found to support these changes.

## 5.8 Ibn Maḍā' s call for the abolition of the principles of ellipsis

In addition to his bold views and his call for the abolition of the theory of government as explained in Chapter Four, Ibn Maḍā' also criticised Arabic grammatical theory for its tendency to assume elements in the sentence. He believed that grammarians have done this only to maintain the symmetry of the various grammatical rules. He classified elements regularly assumed to be ellipted into three types, as follows.

### TYPE 1

Ellipsis of an element, which is essential to the sentence but which the addressee can easily guess. Ibn Maḍā' (1988: 78–79) quotes the Qur'ānic verse (91, 13) as an example:

*nâqat-a Allâh-i wa suqyâhâ*

A she-camel of God and [bar her not from] having her drink.

Grammarians argue that this verse contains an ellipted verb making the assumed structure of the sentence read:

*dharû nâqat-a Allâh-i wa suqyâhâ*

Leave a she-camel of God and [bar her not from] having her drink.

The verb *dharû* (leave) governs the direct object *nâqat-a* (she-camel) in the accusative (cf. Versteegh 1997a: 146–147; Abdeljaber 1985: 136).

## TYPE 2

Ellipses of unnecessary elements in the sentence structure. For example, grammarians claim that the sentence

*a Zayd-an darabtah-u*  
As for Zayd, did you hit him

must have the assumed structure:

*a drabata Zayd-an darabtah-u.*

Here the ellipped verb, in the grammarians' view, is the one that governs the direct object *Zayd-an* in the accusative case. This is because the verb present in the sentence is engaged in governing the pronoun *ha* (cf. 5.5).

## TYPE 3

Ellipsis of hypothetical elements that when shown in the surface structure of the sentence result in the sentence having a meaning different from the one originally intended. For example, the grammarians claim that the assumed structure of the sentence

*yâ Zayd* (O Zayd)

must be

*ad'û Zayd-an*  
I call Zayd.

Here the expressed sentence implies the call, while the assumed sentence merely informs the addressee about the invitation of Zayd by the speaker (cf. Versteegh 1997: 147–149; Abdejaber 1985: 136-138; Wolfe 1984: 68-71).

Ibn Maḍā' (1988: 81) stresses that the process of assuming elements ellipted in the sentence is not a correct methodology and in particular should not be applied to the Holy Qur'ān. He writes:

*ammâ tard-u dhâlika fî kitâb-i Allâh-i ta'âlâ alladhî lâ ya'tîh al-bâṭil min bayn yadayh wa lâ min khalfih wa iddi 'â' ziyâdat ma'ânî fîh-i min ghayr-i ḥâjjah wa lâ dalîl illâ al-qawl bi-anna kull-a mâ yunṣab innamâ yunṣab-u bi-nâṣib ... al-qawl-u bi-dhâlika ḥarâm*

Assuming ellipted elements in God's Book, which is immune from fault in any respect and claiming that it might contain additional meanings without good reason or evidence, such as the assumption that every word in the accusative must have a governing word ... to claim that is a sin.

It is also relevant to point out that Ibn Maḍā' rejects the view that latent pronouns exist in Arabic. He criticises the assumption of ellipted pronouns in the sentence structure which is frequent in Arabic grammatical theory.

Pronouns are considered by Arabic grammatical theory to function as nouns in the sentence. They can be governed in the nominative, the accusative or the genitive. An example of this is

*ḍaraba Zayd-un 'Amr-an*

where the word *Zayd-un* in this case is performing the function of the subject and the word *'Amr-an* is performing the function of the direct object. Pronouns can also perform the function of ordinary words. For example, the *tu* in the sentence

*darab-tu-hu* (I hit him) is performing the function of the subject and the *hu* is performing the function of the direct object.

Arabic grammatical theory considers some pronouns to be latent. Neither overt nouns nor free pronouns can be substituted for them. The following table shows that these pronouns can take nine forms.

EXAMPLE	FUNCTION PERFORMED BY THE LATENT PRONOUN
1. <i>uktub...</i> write	Subject of an imperative verb used in addressing a masculine singular entity.
2. <i>ta 'rif-u... Zayd-an</i> You know Zayd	Subject of a verb in the present perfect used to address a masculine singular entity.
3. <i>aktub-u ... kull-a yawm</i> I write everyday	Subject of a present perfect tense used for the first person
4. <i>nuqaddir-u ... al- 'ilm-a</i> We value knowledge	Subject of a present perfect used for the plural
5. <i>ḥadara al-tullâb-u 'adâ ... wahid-an</i> The students came except one	Subject of a past tense implying exception
6. <i>ḥadara al-tullâb-u laysa ... Zayd-an</i> The students came except Zayd	Noun of <i>laysa</i> (subject) is governed in the nominative
7. <i>mâ aḥsana ... Zayd-an</i> How good is Zayd	Subject of a verb of wonder in the past tense
8. <i>âmin ...</i> Amin	Subject of a verbal noun
9. <i>qiyâm-an ... li-Zayd-in</i> Stand up for Zayd	Subject of an infinitive

Ibn Maḍâ' (1988: 88–93) tried to find an alternative to this assumption of these latent pronouns. For instance, he argues that verbs indicate not only tense and action but also indicate the agents. With respect to imperfect verbs *af'âl mudâri'ah* Arab grammarians argue that the initial *ya* of the third person masculine singular, *a* of the first person masculine singular, *ta* of the third person feminine singular and second person masculine singular and the *na* of the first



person plural cannot be counted as pronouns. They argue that these prefixes indicate the imperfect tense only *hurûf al-mudâra'ah*. However, Ibn Mađâ' argues that the prefixes *ya*, *a*, *ta* and *na* should be considered as indicated of the verbal stem to which they are attached. This can be illustrated by the following example.

*aktub-u kull-a yawm-in*

I write every day

The prefix *a* indicates that the subject is the speaker himself and that therefore there is no need to assume an ellipted pronoun after the verb. Ibn Mađâ' adds that the morphological formulation of verbs or nouns derived from verbs will in fact indicate the subject, and the assumption of ellipted pronouns after them is in his view one of the things that should be dropped from Arabic grammatical theory to make it simpler.

It should be pointed out that the positions in which ellipsis can take place in the Arabic sentence which are discussed here do not cover all the cases considered by the Arab grammarians. This chapter has simply aimed to put forward and consider in some detail the most important points associated with the ellipsis of elements from the Arabic sentence. It has also aimed to shed light on many aspects of Arab grammarians' approaches to the sentence by examining those elements which grammarians assume have been ellipted from the sentence.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **ELLIPSIS IN ARABIC RHETORICAL STUDIES**

Ellipsis is a process that is precise in its way, eloquent where used correctly and like magic. In the case of ellipsis, not mentioning is more eloquent than mentioning.

Al-Jurjânî (1984: 146)

## 6.1 Introduction

As was mentioned in Chapter Two, studies dealing with the subject of rhetoric in the Arabic language began long after the inception of grammatical studies, on which they were dependent in many respects. However, at a later stage rhetoric developed into a fully independent branch of Arabic linguistics. Arab rhetoricians have their own instruments of sentence analysis, which differ in many respects from those used by grammarians (cf. Schaade 1987; al-Zannâd 1992; Haddâd 1982). The main aim of this chapter is to discuss the treatment of ellipsis in studies concerned with the subject of Arabic rhetoric (*balâghah*).

The chapter draws upon the valuable material left to us by ‘Abdul Qâhir al-Jurjânî in his book *Dalâ’il al-i’jâz*. Al-Jurjânî’s work constitutes the material which best represents this branch of Arabic linguistics. Al-Jurjânî seems to have been trying to amend grammatical studies written before his time, and he cleverly drew upon a number of studies dealing with sentence structure to formulate a comprehensive theory, which he called *nazm* (construction).<sup>1</sup> Al-Jurjânî’s theory is distinguished in some cases as being concerned with text larger than a sentence. This resembles in some respects the work of Halliday and Hasan in their book *Cohesion in English*. For this reason, this chapter also presents a comparison between the work of these distinguished modern practitioners and the work of al-Jurjânî.

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<sup>1</sup> al-Jurjânî is considered to be the father of Arabic rhetoric (cf. Dayf 1965: 160; Sallûm 1981: 374).

The rhetoricians' approach to ellipsis is characterised by heavy concentration on the rhetorical reasons that cause a speaker or writer to omit a given element or elements from a sentence. This emphasis stems from the fact that rhetoricians are primarily concerned with the study of meaning; this has led them to believe that a knowledge of what the speaker or writer wishes to convey by ellipsis is a basic principle that needs to be investigated first, before any assumptions are made about which element or elements may have been ellipted.

Arab rhetoricians emphasise the principle that the linguistic system demands the mentioning of all the elements on which attribution (*isnâd*) is based (i.e. the mentioning of all the elements constituting a sentence), but in actual practice, one or more of these elements may be ellipted if sufficient verbal or circumstantial evidence exists: that is, if enough proof is present to assist the addressee to recognise the ellipted element. For rhetoricians, the general principle underlying the concept of ellipsis is the rhetorical needs of the speaker or writer, or their feeling that ellipsis is more eloquent than the rendering of the whole sentence. An example of this is the following. If one were asked

*ayna Zayd-un?*

Where is Zayd ?

the answer could be:

*fî al-sûq-i*

In the market

This involves the ellipsis of the subject of the nominal sentence (*mubtada'*) and the mentioning of the predicate (*khabar*), because ellipsis in this case is more eloquent than the rendering of the whole sentence.

Rhetoricians assert that the purposes which call for ellipsis are varied and numerous, and that ellipsis in a given situation may fulfil many purposes, depending on the specific context in which it is used. Nevertheless, Arab rhetoricians maintain that the process of ellipsis should not in any way impair the communication of the meaning the speaker or writer wishes to convey to the addressees. If this were to happen, ellipsis would become a defect that would need to be avoided. Appropriate ellipses, which Arab rhetoricians advocate and try to promote, are the practice by which redundancy is removed from the sentence, with the result that it becomes stronger and more indicative of the meaning.

## 6.2 Rhetoricians and the concept *nazm* (construction)

Al-Jurjānī can take the credit for the expansion of the concept *nazm* into a comprehensive theory for the analysis of Arabic sentences, although other linguists before him used the term. Ibn al-Muqaffa' (140/757) argues that the essence of *nazm* is the placing of words in their exact positions. Al-Jāhiz (245/869) wrote a book on the subject entitled *Nazm al-Qur'ān* (The Construction of the Qur'ān), but this book is lost (cf. Dayf 1965: 46; Sweity 1992: 70).

The literal meaning of the word *nazm* is defined as follows in *Lisān Al-'Arab* (one of the largest Arabic dictionaries):

*Al-Nazm-u al-ta'lif-u ... wa nazamtu al-lu'lu'-a ayjama'tahu fi al-silk-i wa al-tanzîm-u mithluhu wa minhu nazamtu al-shi'r-a wa nazzamtahu ... wa kull-u shay'-in qarantahu bi-âkhar-a aw damamta ba'dahu ilâ ba'd fa-qad nazamtahu*

*Nazm* is composing ... The example *nazamtu* means I arranged pearls [to make a necklace]. The word *tanzîm* has the same meaning. Both can be used to mean writing poetry ... and everything you put together or join with something else comes under the same heading (Ibn Manzûr 1956 vol. 12, p. 578).

Arab rhetoricians used the term *nazm* in an attempt to devise a proper method for the analysis of Arabic sentences, chiefly the Qur'ânic verses. In this context Al-Bâqillânî (1972: 35) writes:

*inna nazm-a al-Qur'ân 'alâ tasarruf-i wujûhih wa tabâyun-i madhâhibih-i khârij-un 'an al-ma'hûd min nizâm-i jamî'-i kalâmihim wa mubâyin li al-ma'lûf-i min tartîb-i khutâbihim wa lahu uslûb-un yakhtass-u bih-i wa yatamayyaz-u fî tasarrufih-i 'an asâlib-i al-kalâm-i al-mu'tâd*

The construction of the Qur'ân, despite its many faces and different aspects, is outside their [the Arabs'] customary speech and different from their usual speeches. It has its own style, and it is characterised by its unique form of expression, which is different from ordinary speech.

For Arab rhetoricians, the Holy Qur'ân represents a supreme or ideal form of the Arabic language, which must be studied first of all for religious reasons, so

that one can benefit from the study of the Qur'ânic verses in analysing other Arabic expressions in poetry or prose which are far less eloquent than the Qur'ânic verses.

Al-Jurjânî intended to develop the prevailing theoretical model of Arabic grammar that dominated Arabic linguistics by accepting the efforts of linguists before him to explain the interdependence of the words forming the sentence (cf. Chapter Two). Moreover, he called for more explanation of this interdependence. This is evident from the following statement (1984: 412–413):

*i 'lam anna mathal-a wâḍi' al-kalâm-i mathal-u man ya'khudh-u qita'-  
an min al-dhahab-i aw al-fiddah fa-yudhîb-u ba'dahâ fî ba'd hattâ  
tasîr-a qit'at-an wâḥidah. wa dhalika annaka idhâ qulta daraba Zayd-  
un 'Amr-an yawma al-jumu'ah darb-an shadîd-an ta'dîb-an lahu, fa-  
innaka tahsul-u min majmû'-i hâdhih-i al-kalim kullihâ 'alâ mufhûm-  
in huwa ma'nâ wâḥid lâ 'iddat ma'ânî kamâ yatawahanu al-nâs*

Know that the person who composes speech is like someone who takes pieces of gold or a piece of silver and melts them and fuses them together until they finally become one piece. This is because if you say “Zayd hit ‘Amr on Friday very hard in order to discipline him”, you get from all these words one conception, which is the one meaning of all these words, and not many meanings as people may think.

In the work of early Arab grammarians there are only a few examples where there is specific reference to semantic relations (cf. Chapter Five). It is possible to see a shift from total absence of treatments of semantic phenomena in

Sibawayh's Book to an advanced interest in rhetorical works such as al-Jurjani.

Sentence analysis for Sibawayh is not more than explaining the parsing signs.

Despite his acceptance of the rhetorical importance of individual words, al-Jurjânî insists that this is not a significant principle and is not itself a source of eloquence. The source of eloquence in his view is the *nazm* (construction), which is why he says (1984: 4):

*ma'lûm-un an laysa al-nazm-u siwâ ta'alluq-i al-kalim-i ba'duhâ bi-ba'd wa ja'l-i ba'dihâ bi-sabab-in min ba'd wa al-kalim-u thalâth: ism-un wa fi'l-un wa harf wa li-al-ta'liq-i fi-mâ baynahâ turuq-un ma'lûmah, wa huwa lâ ya'dû thalâthat-a aqsâm: ta'alluq-u ism-in bi-ism, wa ta'alluq-u ism bi-fi'l wa ta'alluq-u harf bihimâ*

It is understood that *nazm* (construction) is no more than the combination of words with one another and the making of some of them the result of others. Words are of three types: *ism* (noun), *fi'l* (verb), and *harf* (particle). The combining of them takes known forms, which include the association of a noun with a noun, the association of a noun with a verb and the association of a particle with either of them.



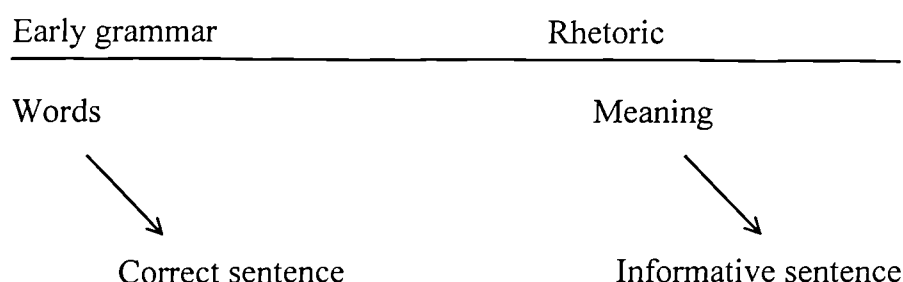
The Arabic rhetorical theory believed that *al-ta'alluq wa al-tarâbut* (association and bonding) is between the meanings of individual words, and not between the individual words themselves. In other words, the association between two words with no underlying meaning is not presupposed.

Rhetoricians attach great importance to the psychological effects revealed by the sentence. In other words, they remind us that the sentence, whether written or spoken, is the product of the human mind where meanings are stored. The human mind, then, is capable of expressing those meanings using individual words. This is implicit in the writing of al-Jurjânî who thinks that one cannot know the position of words unless one knows their meanings; the writer or speaker's aim should be to use thoughts in order to deduce the meaning of the sentence. When one finishes organising the meanings in mind, one doesn't need to think again to organise words, as they will be organised by themselves because they serve the meanings.

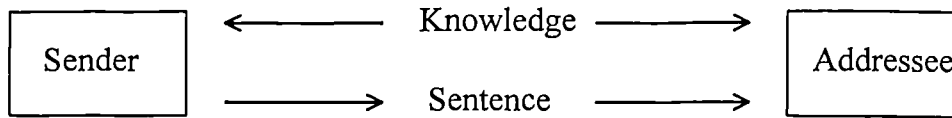
The semantic relationships among sentential elements show that the Arab rhetoricians associate sentence analysis with lexical and grammatical meanings. For example, when one thinks of a particular word in one's mind, one is attempting to assign it to a certain grammatical function.

It can be argued that Arab rhetoricians had given a new dimension to the Arabic sentence analysis. They considered the communicative functions of the sentence. They rejected the view that: ellipsis is useful in some sentences and not useful in others.

The importance of the rhetorical approach of sentence analysis lies in the new method they adopted. They added pragmatic aspects to the medieval Arabic grammatical theory. Consider the following diagram:



Rhetoricians' concentration on *nazm* (the construction) of the sentence and the significance they attach to its role in rendering the sentence eloquent stems from the fact that language is a means of communication between members of a society. Rhetoricians concentrate on the social dimension of language, insisting that the meaning of the sentence must correspond to its social function. In this connection, they argue that it is important that the sender and the addressee should share a certain amount of information if the process of communication between them is to succeed. Sentences are means of communication, but by themselves are not enough to convey the required meaning unless they are assisted by the knowledge the sender and the addressee have about the circumstances surrounding the speech, as the following diagram shows:



Arab rhetoricians' treatment of ellipsis concentrates on the capacity of ellipsis to convey meaning and influence the addressee (cf. Atîq 1985: 133; Amîn 1990: 198–199). This can be understood from the following statement of al-Jurjânî (1984: 146):

*huwa bâb-un daqîq-u al-maslak-i laţîf-u al-ma'khadh 'ajîb-u al-amr  
shabîh-un bi-al-sihr fa-innaka tarâ bih-i tark-a al-dhikr afṣaḥ-a min  
al-dhikr*

It [ellipsis] is a process that is precise in its way, eloquent where used correctly, and like magic. With ellipsis, not mentioning is more eloquent than mentioning.

According to al-Jurjânî, one of the most important principles of *nazm* is that judging the force of the sentence should take into consideration the text as a whole rather than some parts of it. He (al-Jurjânî 1984: 88) makes this clear in the following passage:

*i'lam anna min al-kalâm-i mâ anta tarâ al-mazyyat-a fî nazmih ... fa-  
anta lâ tukbir-u sha'na ṣâhibih wa lâ taqdî lahu bi-al-hidhq wa al-  
ustâdhiyyah wa sa'at al-ittilâ' wa quwwat al-uslûb hattâ tastawfî al-  
qiṭ'ah*

Know that there are texts which are well constructed [as parts], ... but you cannot consider the writer good and well-informed unless you finish the whole text.

### 6.3 Ellipsis of *musnad ilayh*

Arabic linguistic theory considers the *musnad ilayh* to be an indispensable element in the sentence, because the sentence cannot be informative without it. The *musnad ilayhi* refers to the subject of the nominal sentence and the agent of the verb in the verbal sentence, whereas the *musnad* is the topic of the nominal sentence and the verb of the verbal sentence. Arab rhetoricians agreed that these two components are the first and the second indispensable parts of the nominal and verbal sentences respectively. For this reason they cannot be ellipped, except if there is a strong indication of them in the sentence (cf. Chapter Three). Ellipsis of the *mubtada'*, which is the most important type of *musnad ilayh*, according to Arabic rhetorical theory can be more eloquent in some situations than its inclusion. One of these situations occurs when one is using what is called the “pause and resumption” style (*al-qat' wa al-isti'nâf*). This happens when the speaker or writer talks about a certain subject and then pauses and shifts to another subject, mentioning only the *khavar*, in the belief that the *mubtada'* is well established in the minds of the addressees and that there is therefore no need to mention it a second time (cf. Amaireh 1984: 135–136). Al-Jurjânî gives the following examples from Arab poetry to illustrate this style:

*wa 'alimtu annî yawma dhâka*

*munâzil-an ka 'b-an wa nahdâ*  
*qawm-un idhâ labisû al-ḥadîd-a*  
*tanammarû ḥilaq-an wa qiddâ*

I knew that day that I was  
 about to fight Ka'b and Nahd  
 People who, if they wear iron,  
 become moving shields and armour

Here the assumed structure of the sentence is *hum qawm-un* (They are people), but the subject of the nominal sentence, the *mubtada'* (*hum*) is ellipted. Another example al-Jurjânî gives is:

*sa-ashkur-u 'amr-an in tarâkhat maniyyatî*  
*ayâdiy-a lam tabkhal wa in hiya jallat-i*  
*fat-an ghayra mahjûb-i al-ghinâ 'an ṣadîqih-i*  
*wa lâ muzhira al-shakwâ idhâ al-na'l-u zallat-i*

I will keep thanking 'Amr as long as I live  
 His hands, although noble, are never mean  
 A young man who never hides his wealth from his friends  
 Nor does he pretend poverty when asked

The word *fatâ* (a young man), at the beginning of the third line, is the predicate (*khavar*) of an ellipted subject (*mubtada'*) which is *huwa* (he) or *'Amr*.

Such ellipsis also occurs in the Qur'ân, as in the following verses (18, 22):

*sayaqûlûna thalâthat-un râbi'uhum kalbuhum wa yaqûlûna khamsat-un sâdisuhum kalbuhum rajm-an bi-al-ghayb wa yaqûlûna sab'at-un wa thâminuhum kalbuhum*

[Some] say they were three, the dog being the fourth among them; [others] say they were five, the dog being the sixth, doubtfully guessing at the unknown; [yet others] say they were seven, the dog being the eighth.

The words *thalâthat-un* (three), *khamsat-un* (five) and *sab'at-un* (seven) function as *khabars* of the ellipted *mubtada'* (they).

The subject (*mubtada'*) is usually ellipted in that genre of poetry which laments the home of loved ones who no longer live there and who have left their old home to live somewhere else, as in the following:

*a'tâda qalbaka min Laylâ 'wâ'idahu*

*wa hâja ahwâ'aka al-maknûnat-a al-talal-u*

*rab'-un qawâ'-un adhâ'a al-mu'sirât-u bih-i*

*wa kull-u hayrâna sâr-in mâ'uhu khadil-u*

Your heart was wounded by memories of Layla

And her ruins raised your hidden affections

Her place is empty and the winds blow in it

And the raining clouds pass by it

By *rab'-un qawâ'-un* the poet means:

*dhâka rab '-un qawâ '-un*

That was an empty place.

Abû Mûsâ (1979: 133) argues that the rhetorical reason behind this type of ellipsis lies in the fact that the remembering of old homes and lodgings where loved ones used to live have a special influence on the poet's spirit. When the poet remembers the loved ones his feelings become highly charged, and this forces him to use short concentrated expressions involving the ellipsis of the first element of the sentence, which is the subject (*mubtada'*). An example of this is:

*di yâr-un li-Salmâ 'âfiyât-in bi-Dhî khâl-i*

*ahall-a 'alayhâ kull-u ashâma hattâl-i*

The home belonging to Salma is in *Dhî khâl*

I ask every cloud to drop its rain there

Al-Jurjânî (1984: 152) explains the rhetorical reason for the ellipsis of the subject of the nominal sentence (*mubtada'*) when it represents or refers to something unpleasant which nobody wants to remember or hear about, as in the following lines:

*al-'ayn-u tubdî al-hubb-a wa al-baghdâ*

*wa tuzhir-u al-ibrâm-a wa al-naqdâ*

*Durrat-u mâ anṣaftinî fi al-hawâ*

*wa lâ rahîmt-i al-jasad-a al-mundâ*

*ghadabî wa lâ wa-Allâh-i yâ ahlâhâ*

*lâ at'am-u al-bârid-a aw tardâ*

The eye shows love and hatred

And also shows rejection and criticism

Durrah, you are unfair in our love

and did not have mercy on my weak body

In anger, and I swear by God to her family

I will not drink water unless she is happy

The assumed structure is *hiya ghadabî*, but the poet has ellipted the subject (*mubtada'*), which is the word *hiya* (she), because he is describing a girl by the name of *Durrah* whom he loves very much, although her parents refused to let him marry her so that he started to hate to hear her name or any reference to it.

One of the rhetorical justifications for ellipsis of the subject of the nominal sentence (*mubtada'*), which Arab rhetoricians often cite is if there is a fear of repetition. For example, the answer to the question

*kayfa hâluk ?*

How are you?

would normally be:

*bi-khayr*

All right.

The assumed structure of the sentence is:

*hâli bi-khayr*

I am all right



but the *mubtada'*, which is the word *ḥālī*, has been ellipted to avoid repetition. Nevertheless, although it is rhetorically desirable to delete the *mubtada'* in this case, it is possible to mention it. Likewise, Arab rhetoricians argue that it is desirable to delete the *mubtada'* if it is preceded by the verb *qāla* (to say) or one of its derivatives. An example of this occurs in the following Qur'ānic verse (25, 5):

*qālū asâtîr-u al-awwalîn*

They say, "Tales of the ancients"

The assumed structure of this is

*qālū al-Qur'ân asâtîr-u al-awwalîn*

but the subject *mubtada'*, which is the word *al-Qur'ân*, has been ellipted (cf. Qalqilah 1992: 194).

The *mubtada'* may also be ellipted to avoid repetition if it comes after the *fa* expressing a result that depends on a condition, as in the Qur'ānic verse (41, 46):

*man 'amila ṣāliḥ-an fa-li-nafsih-i wa man asâ'a fa-'alayhâ*

Whoever works righteousness benefits his own soul; whoever works evil, it is against his own soul

The assumed structure of this is (cf. 'Abbâs 1989: 265):

*fa-'amaluhu li-nafsih wa isâ'atuhu 'alayhâ*

Rhetoricians also argue that some sentences have become common sayings, and people use them in the same way as they were first used by their inventors. An example of this is the following proverb

*ramyat-un min ghayr-i râm-in*

A strike without a striker

The assumed structure of the sentence is

*hiya ramyat-un*

It [is] a strike

but users of the expression use it in the same form as that in which they first heard it, without trying to use the complete structure of the sentence (cf. al-Hammûz 1984).

Al-Jurjânî argues that the speaker or writer may resort to ellipsis of the *musnad ilayh* from the sentence for psychological reasons. The speaker, for example, may ellipst the name of a person or the pronoun referring to that person because he does not wish to mention their name, as happens, according to al-Jurjânî, in the following lines of poetry:

*'aradtu 'alâ Zayd-in li-ya'khuḍh-a ba'd-a mâ*

*yuhâwiluhu qabl-a i'tirâḍ al-shawâghil-i*

*fa-dabba dabîba al-baghl-i ya'lam-u zahrahu*

*wa qâla ta'allam innanî ghayr-u fâ'il-i*

*tathâ'aba ḥattâ qultu dâsi'-u nafsuhu*

*wa-akhraja anyâb-an lahu ka-al-ma'âwil-i*

I suggested that Zayd take some of what

He was trying to get before distractions intervened

Then he walked slowly like a mule with a pain in his back

And said "You know I am not going to do this"

He yawned until I said "He is throwing out his soul"

And showed his teeth, which were like mattocks

According to Al-Jurjânî (1984: 151), the phrase *dâsi 'u nafsahu* (throwing out his soul) has the assumed structure *huwa dâsi 'u nafsahu*, but the poet has ellipted the pronoun *huwa* (he) because it refers to someone whom he hates because in the past he refused to help him.

#### 6.4 Ellipsis of *musnad*

According to Arabic linguistic theory, the *musnad* (attribute) is the second indispensable element in the sentence (cf. Chapter Three). Rhetoricians understand that the *musnad* can be a noun as well as a verb.

Arab rhetoricians are less concerned with ellipsis of the *musnad* than with ellipsis of the *musnad ilayh*. This may be attributed to their belief that the situations in which the *musnad ilayh* is ellipted are much more numerous than those in which the *musnad* is ellipted. In other words, they believe that the rhetorical aims involved in the ellipsis of the *musnad ilayh* are more significant

than those which may be achieved by ellipsis of the *musnad* (cf. Abû Shâdî 1992: 18; Amaireh 1984: 134–148).

One of the most important situations in which the predicate (*musnad*) is ellipted is the case of co-ordination, as in:

*Zayd-un karîm-un wa ‘Amr-un ayḍ-an*

Zayd is generous and so is ‘Amr.

Here the assumed structure of the sentence is

*Zayd-un karîm-un wa ‘Amr-u karîm-un ayḍ-an*

but the predicate of the second sentence is ellipted because it is the same word as was used as a predicate in the first sentence (cf. Amîn 1990: 153; Abd al-Muttalib 1994: 325).

Another example is the following Qur’ânic verse (5, 5):

*wa ṭa‘âm-u alladhîna ūtû al-kitâb-a ḥill-un lakum wa ṭa‘âmakum ḥill-un lahum wa al-muḥsanât-u min alladhîna ūtû al-kitâb*

The food of the people of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them [lawful unto you in marriage] are [not only] chaste women who are believers, but chaste women among the people of the Book.

Here the predicate *ḥill-un lakum* (lawful unto you) in the third co-ordinated sentence (i.e. *jumlah*) is ellipted, because it has been mentioned in the first sentence.

Rhetoricians argue that one of the reasons for the ellipsis of the predicate is the desire of the speaker to make the meaning of his speech stronger. This is because deleting the predicate gives the addressee the possibility of imagining a broad meaning for the sentence (i.e. it gives him the possibility of imagining more ellipted elements). An example of this occurs in the following Qur'ânic verse (8, 41):

*wa i'lamû innamâ ghanimtum min shay'-in fa-inna li Allah-i khumsahu*

And know that out of all the booty that ye may acquire [in war], a fifth share is assigned to God.

Here it is assumed that the sentence *fa-inna li Allah-i khumsahu* is a *mubtada'* whose predicate has been ellipted but which may be reckoned as *ḥaqq-un* (right). Hence the ellipsis of the predicate has in this case given the addressee the chance to imagine more than one predicate, and this has given the expression more strength (cf. Abû Mûsâ 1979: 244; Atîq 1985: 140).

Rhetoricians argue that the ellipsis of the predicate is preferable if there is an element to indicate the ellipted predicate in the structure, as in

*inna Zayd-an wa inna 'Amr-an*

Indeed, Zayd or 'Amr

which is the answer to the question:

*hal laykum aḥad-un?*

Do you have someone?

The implicit meaning of the example is:

*inna lanâ Zayd-an wa inna lanâ ‘Amr-an*

We have Zayd and we have ‘Amr.

However, both the *lanâ* predicates have been ellipted because *inna* always requires a subject and a predicate, and predicate it is mentioned together with the subject and the predicate is ellipted, it then becomes easier for the addressee to understand the ellipted predicate (cf. al-Jurjânî 1984 p. 321; Sibawayh 1975 vol. 1, p. 283–284).

It may be observed that Arabic rhetoric attaches far greater significance to the ellipsis of nouns, especially the subject of the nominal sentence (*mubtada’*) and the direct object (*maf’ûl bih-i*), than to that of verbs functioning as *musnad*. To the writer’s knowledge no Arab linguist has put forward any reasons for this. Bayshak (1991: 275–276), however, has tried to justify al-Jurjânî’s concentration on the ellipsis of nouns by arguing that verbs in Arabic have special grammatical features because they contain an element of tense, gender, person and number (except when followed by the subject). She quotes the following examples in support of this argument:

*ya’kul-u*

present + third person + singular + masculine

He eats.

*ta’kul-u*

present + third person + singular + feminine

She eats.

*na'kul-u*

present + first person + plural  
We eat.

*âkul-u*

present + first person + singular  
I eat.

This means that the ellipsis of a verb involves the ellipsis of some other indicative elements associated with it. The justification presented by Bayshak, however, is insufficient. Arab rhetoricians appears to have neglected issues relating to the ellipsis of verbs in the belief that the subject has been dealt with thoroughly by grammarians, who have regarded it as one of the factors most helpful to them in laying down grammar and who have given it special attention (cf. Chapter Five). The main aim rhetoricians have had in studying ellipsis has been to determine the rhetorical aims of the speaker or writer, which they believe have been neglected by grammarians.

When al-Jurjânî made reference to the ellipsis of verbs, for example, he quoted the same example as that given by Sibawayh (1975 vol. 1, p. 280; vol. 2 p. 247), namely the line:

*diyâr-a Mayyata idh Mayy-un tusâ 'ifunâ*

*wa lâ yurâ mithluhâ 'ujam-un wa lâ 'arab-u*

[Remember] Mayyah's place, where she helps us

No one like her [in beauty], neither Arabs nor non-Arabs

The word *diyâr-a* in this example is in the accusative, and this indicates that there is a verb ellipted from the sentence, the assumed structure being:

*udhkur diyâr-a Mayyata*

Al-Jurjânî (1984: 147) argues that in terms of rhetoric, the ellipsis of a verb at the beginning of the sentence serves the same purpose as that of the subject *mubtada'* as the following statement shows:

*wa kamâ yudmirûna al-mubtada' fa-yarfa'ûna fa-qad yudmirûna al-fi'l-a fa-yanşibûn*

Just as the [Bedouin Arabs] suppress the *mubtada'* and govern [the noun] in the nominative, they could also suppress the verb and govern [the noun] in the accusative.

The general principle that governs the ellipsis of both *musnad* and *musnad ilayh* is given a great deal of attention in Arabic rhetoric. It takes as a starting point the central grammatical principle that ellipsis cannot exist without recoverability (cf. al-Qazwînî [n. d.]: 110–111; Ali 1988: 603). Arab grammarians before al-Jurjânî outlined this principle, but did not explain it in detail. The examples above show that when dealing with elliptical sentences, Arab rhetoricians are concerned with an acceptability judgement rather than with grammaticality judgement especially because they are in the realm of text and the variable of appropriateness is the most important criterion to judge the eloquence of the speech. Attaining this is not only a matter of making the correct syntactical and lexical choices which are prescribed by the grammar but rather is dependent on the finding of meanings that are the most eloquent, beautiful and appropriate in



the given situation. The analyses of elliptical sentences offered by the late Arab rhetoricians show that they were very aware of the different components of the social context and the psychological state of the speaker and the addressee. They did not discuss these elements in a systematic way and there was no explicitly integrated methodology or framework in which these elements are presented for discussion.

The ellipted element may be recovered by considering factors which encompass the whole context of the sentence within the communication process. This is because communication, according to Arabic rhetorical theory, among other things, is the result of social conventions and is not merely the result of creativity of the speaker or writer. Composing eloquent sentences is termed *naẓm*. Arab rhetoricians were the advocates of establishing strong link between syntax and semantics and of treating semantics in its wider sense, i. e. that which involve social context and the state of the speaker and the addressee.

What distinguishes one elliptical sentence from another with the same basic grammatical structure in the view of Arab rhetoricians is the stylistic force rather than the grammatical accuracy. It can be seen therefor that the concept of meaning is at the core of the traditional Arabic rhetorical theory as typified by al-Jurjānī's works.

Language users generally select from among number of options, which are granted by the grammar of language to express meaning. The Arabic rhetorical theory accounts for this process of selection as the fundamental source of stylistic diversity in language use. They also maintain that the view that the two sentences with different structures have the same meaning is fallacy because as they say 'extra structure extra meaning'.

### 6.5 Ellipsis of *fadlah*

By the term *fadlah* traditional Arab linguists mean the element that can be ellipped so that the sentence remains informative (cf. Chapter Three). The early Arabic grammatical theory uses the term *fadlah* (extra element) to refer to the elements that occur in a sentence in addition to the verb and its subject.

The *fadlah* was regarded as the contrary of '*umdah* (essential element). This is considered a crucial element without which neither a nominal nor a verbal sentence could be meaningful. Arab rhetoricians paid considerable attention to the ellipsis of *fadlah*; nevertheless none of them explicitly mentioned the principles that can be used as a systematic theory. They assume that the direct object can represent a semantic value to the sentence. The semantic relations that relate the direct object to the other elements in the sentence also received an essential focus in the traditional Arabic rhetorical theory because some of verbal sentence can only

be completed by the direct object. In other words, eloquence derives from the existence of both the doer and the patient together with the verb's action. Rhetoricians also concentrate on the ellipsis of the direct object (cf. Suleiman 1990; Amîn 1990: 167). They see it as serving a number of rhetorical purposes. In this context, al-Jurjânî (1984: 153) writes:

*wa idh qad bada'nâ fî al-ḥadhf-i bi dhikr-i al-mubtada' wa huwa ḥadhf-u ism idh lâ yakûn-u al-mubtada' illâ ism-an fa-innî utbi'-u dhâlika dhikr-a al-maf'ûl bih-i idhâ ḥudhifa khuṣûṣ-an fa-inna al-ḥâjat-a ilayh-i amass wa huwa bimâ nahnu biṣadadih-i akhass wa al-latâ'if-u ka'annahâ fih-i akthar wa min mâ yazhar-u bisababih-i min al-ḥusn-i wa al-rawnaq-i a'jab-u wa azhar*

As we started with ellipsis of the *mubtada'*, since the *mubtada'* can be nothing but a noun, I now turn to ellipses of the direct object when it is ellpted for a specific reason, because this is very important and is what we are chiefly concerned with. Such ellipsis results in the appearance of a special kind of beauty and glory of expression.

Here, al-Jurjânî summarises the views of all his rhetorician predecessors concerning the role the direct object plays in the sentence. Arabic rhetorical theory assumes that whenever a transitive verb is introduced in a sentence, the intention is normally to include a direct object in the sentence. Rhetoricians emphasise the fact that the principal role of the direct object is purely informative, telling us that an action has actually been performed upon it, as in:

*daraba Zayd-un 'Amr-an*

Zayd has hit 'Amr

Here, the main aim is to inform the reader that ‘Amr has actually been hit and that Zayd was the perpetrator. In other words, the intention is to make it clear that there was an act of hitting that happened to ‘Amr at the hands of Zayd, and what makes that clear is the parsing signs (*ḥarakât al-i‘râb*) where *Zayd-un* is in the nominative case and *‘Amr-an* is in the accusative case. However, this basic rule may be changed for rhetorical purposes as in the following examples:

*huwa ya‘mur-u wa yanhâ*

He commands and prohibits

Here, the verbs *ya‘mur-u* (to command) and *yanhâ* (to prohibit) are transitive verbs that normally require objects. However, their objects are ellipted for rhetorical purposes. The ellipsis of the objects here leaves the scope of the actions represented by the two verbs boundless. In other words, if the speaker or writer adds an object to the verbs the meaning of the action will be restricted only to the object chosen, whereas if the object is left unmentioned, the action denoted by *ya‘mur-u* applies to everything and so does the action indicated by *yanhâ*.

A similar case is furnished by the example:

*Zayd-un yu‘tî*

Zayd gives

Here, despite the fact that *yu‘tî* is a transitive verb requiring more than one direct object, the ellipsis of the direct object in this case allows for a wider meaning, since what is actually meant is that Zayd can give anything (cf. 4.3.1; Suleiman 1990: 261; Atîq 1985: 142).

Here is a contrasting example where the action of the verb is limited only to the object:

*Zayd-un yu 'tî al-danânîr*

Zayd gives money

Here, the act of giving by Zayd is limited to money only.

Rhetoricians argue that there are some transitive verbs which are usually used without the direct object being mentioned. In this case, the emphasis is on the attribution (*isnâd*) of the action to the subject, as in the following examples:

*fulân-un yahill-u wa ya 'qid*

So-nom. free-ind. and binds

So and so is in full control.

*fulân-un ya 'mur-u wa yanhâ*

So-nom. command-ind. and prohibits

So and so has supreme authority.

*fulân-un yadurr-u wa yanfa'*

So-nom. harms-ind. and benefits.

So and so is harmful and helpful [at the same time].

The same applies in the following Qur'ânic verses (39, 9):

*qul hal yastawî al-ladhîna ya 'lamûna wa al-ladhîna lâ ya 'lamûn*

Say, "Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?"

Here, the verb *ya'lam* (to know) is a transitive verb which needs an object. But in this verse, the object is ellipted to indicate a more general meaning of “know”, namely “know everything”.

Another conclusion to be drawn from al-Jurjânî's argument is that the direct object can be ellipted if it is limited to a certain verb. In other words, some transitive verbs take objects that are always associated with them. The listener in cases can easily guess such objects where they are ellipted, as in this example:

*asghaytu ilayh-i*

I listened to him.

The verb *yusghî* (to listen) is a transitive verb that needs an object. The assumed structure of the sentence is:

*asghaytu ilayh-i udhunî*

I made my ear listen to him.

However, the word *udhunî* (my ear) is ellipted, since it is clear to everyone that listening necessarily involves the ear. Moreover, ellipsis of “ear” here gives the meaning of concentrated listening, as if the subject is listening using all his senses, not only hearing.

The direct object may be ellipted also if there is a need to corroborate the meaning, as in:

*qara'tu hattâ al-ghilaf*

I read up to the cover

Here, the purpose of the phrase *hattâ al-ghilaf* is to emphasise the actual reading of the whole book cover to cover, and the ellipsis of the direct object *al-kitâb-a* (the book) aims to emphasis this fact. Thus the assumed structure is:

*qara 'tu al-kitâb-a hattâ al-ghilaf*

I read the book up to the cover

Al-Jurjânî quotes the following line as an example of this type of ellipsis of the direct object:

*wa kam dhudta 'annî min tahâmûl-i hâdith-in*

*wa sawrat-i ayyâm-in hazazna ilâ al-'azm-i*

How many times have you defended me against calamity

and some bad days that cut to the bone!

Here the assumed structure is:

*hazazna al-laḥm-a ilâ al-'azm-i*

cut the meat to the bone

However, the direct object (the word *al-laḥm-a*) has been ellipted and the inclusion of the word *al-'azm-i* gives a stronger indication of the bitterness felt by the poet ('Arafah 1984: 224).

Another example al-Jurjânî cites to illustrate this point is:

*jazâ Allah-u 'annâ Ja 'far-an hîna azlaqat*

*binâ na 'lunâ fî al-wâṭi 'îna fa-zallat-i*

*abaw an yamallûnâ wa law anna ummanâ*

*tulâqî alladhî lâqawhu minnâ la-mallat-i*

*humu khalaṭûnâ bi-al-nufûs-i wa alja 'û*

*ilâ hujurât-in adfa'at wa azallat-i*

God reward [the tribe of] Ja'far

When we were in need

They did not get bored with us where even our mother

would be bored if she faced what they faced

They embraced us and accommodated us

in warm and safe rooms

Here the direct object, the pronoun *nâ*, is ellipted in four places. In the second line, the assumed structure of sentence *la-mallat-i* is *la-mallat-nâ*, but the direct object *nâ* (us) is ellipted to make the meaning more eloquent. Similarly, the direct object *nâ* is also ellipted from the three verbs, *alja'û*, where the assumed structure of the sentence is *alja'ûnâ*, *adfa'at* where the assumed structure of the sentence is *adfa'ûnâ*, and *azallat-i*, where the assumed structure of the sentence is *azallatnâ*. Al-Jurjânî justifies this type of ellipsis by maintaining that the verb *mallat* is a transitive verb which in normal circumstances requires a direct object, but that the ellipsis of the direct object in this case, besides making the meaning wider, occurs in a context where it is easy to guess what the direct object should be because the poet is talking about himself or a specific group and the direct object in this case must be the pronoun *nâ* (cf. Bayshak 1991: 269; Suleiman 1990: 260–261).

Al-Jurjânî argues that if the poet were to have mentioned the direct object in this case, this picture which he wanted to paint for us would have been spoiled, and the meaning of each verb would have been tied to the meaning of each single



direct object (i.e. it would have been restricted). The same argument applies to the verbs *alja'û*, *adfa'at* and *azallat*. They would have become less informative had the direct objects associated with them been mentioned. This may perhaps be explained better using an example from the English language. For example, a person may say:

He helped us

in reference to the help one has got from somebody. This, however, does not necessarily mean that the helper helps other people, because we have restricted the meaning by mentioning the direct object, which in this case is the word “us”.

But, if one says

He helped

and no more, then the meaning becomes extended to include other people and not only “us” (cf. Bayshak 1991: 270; Suleiman 1990: 261; ‘Abbâs 1985: 280).

Another example occurs in the line:

*idhâ ba'udat ablat wa in qarubat shafat*

*fa-hijrânuhâ yublî wa luqyânuhâ yashfî*

If she deserts [me] she destroys [me] and if she is here she cures

Her desertion destroys [me] and her meeting [with me] cures

The assumed structure of the sentence is

*shafatnî*

cures me

*ablatnî*  
destroys me

but the poet has ellipted the direct object, which is the pronoun *î* (me) to make the meaning wider. So, after ellipsis the line means that the absence of the girl from the neighborhood makes everyone who knows her sick (and not only the speaker), and contrariwise, that being near her when she is around cures everyone who comes in touch with her. Arab poets use this device to praise their loved ones and to explain their attitudes so as not to be blamed by others (cf. al-Jurjânî 1984: 162; Amîn 1990: 169).

Al-Jurjânî (1984: 160) adds that this is similar to the situation where a good friend has hurt you and you are complaining to him that he has said something which has hurt you:

*qad kâna minka mâ yu'lim*

Indeed, there occurred from you what could hurt.

Since the speaker is talking about himself, the reference to his identity should appear as a first person pronoun (*-nî*) attached to the verb functioning as a direct object (i.e. *yu'limuni*). However, the speaker deletes the object to make the meaning of the verb indefinite. That is, the speaker does not only wish to indicate that what his friend did was offensive to him, but also wants to imply that the action would be offensive to anyone.

This device is also used in the following Qur'ânic verse (28, 23–24):

*wa lammâ warada mâ'-a Madyana wajada 'alayh-i ummat-an min al-nâs yasqûna wa wajada min dûnihimâ imra'atayn-i tadhûdân-i. qâla mâ khatbukumâ qâlatâ la nasqî hattâ yasdur-a al-ri'â' wa abûnâ shaykh-un kabîr fa-saqâ lahumâ thumma tawallâ ilâ al-zill*

And when he arrived at the watering [place] of Madyan, he found there a group of men watering [their flock]. And beside them he found two women who were keeping back [their flock]. He said "What is the matter with you?" They said: "We cannot water [our flock] until the shepherds take back [their flock] and our father is very old man. So he watered [their flock] for them then he turned back to the shade.

Here the direct object is ellipted in four places, as follows:

Position	Assumed structure
1 After the verb <i>yasqûna</i>	<i>yasqûna aghnâmahumâ</i>
2 After the verb <i>tadhûdân-i</i>	<i>tadhûdân-i aghnâmahumâ</i>
3 After the verb <i>nasqî</i>	<i>nasqî aghnâmanâ</i>
4 After the verb <i>fa-saqâ</i>	<i>fa-saqâ aghnâmahumâ</i>

The reason for the ellipsis is that there is no emphasis on the direct object, which is the word *aghnam* (sheep), but rather on the process of watering (i.e. it does not matter if the direct object in this case is sheep, goats, cattle or camels). If however, any one of these types of livestock were to be added to the sentence,

then the process of watering would become restricted to the type of livestock being mentioned ('Arafah 1984: 225).

One of the rhetorical purposes that justifies ellipsis of the direct object is the strengthening of the meaning for the reader or listener so that it becomes clear following a previous ambiguity, as in

*law shi'tu ji' tu aw lam aji'*

If I wanted [to come] or didn't want to come

where the assumed structure of the sentence is:

*law shi'tu al-majî'-a*

However, the word *al-majî'-a*, which is a direct object, has been ellipated. This is because the aim of the speaker is to make his meaning ambiguous first and then remove the ambiguity in the second sentence, *aw lam aji'*.

The direct object may also be ellipated in case of rhyming, as in the following Qur'ânic verse (93, 3):

*mâ wadda'aka rabbuka wa mâ qalâ*

The Guardian-Lord hath not forsaken thee, nor is He displeased

Here, the pronoun *k* after the verb *qalâ*, which is functioning as a direct object, has been ellipated to facilitate the rhyming of this verse with the ones that preceded it, which are:

*wa al-duḥâ wa al-layl-i idhâ sajâ*

By glorious morning light. And by the night when it is still...

The direct object may also be ellipited for the purpose of glorification, as in the line:

*qad talabnâ fa-lam najid laka fî*

*al-su'dad-i wa al-majd-i wa al-makârim-i mithlâ*

We searched hard and we couldn't find

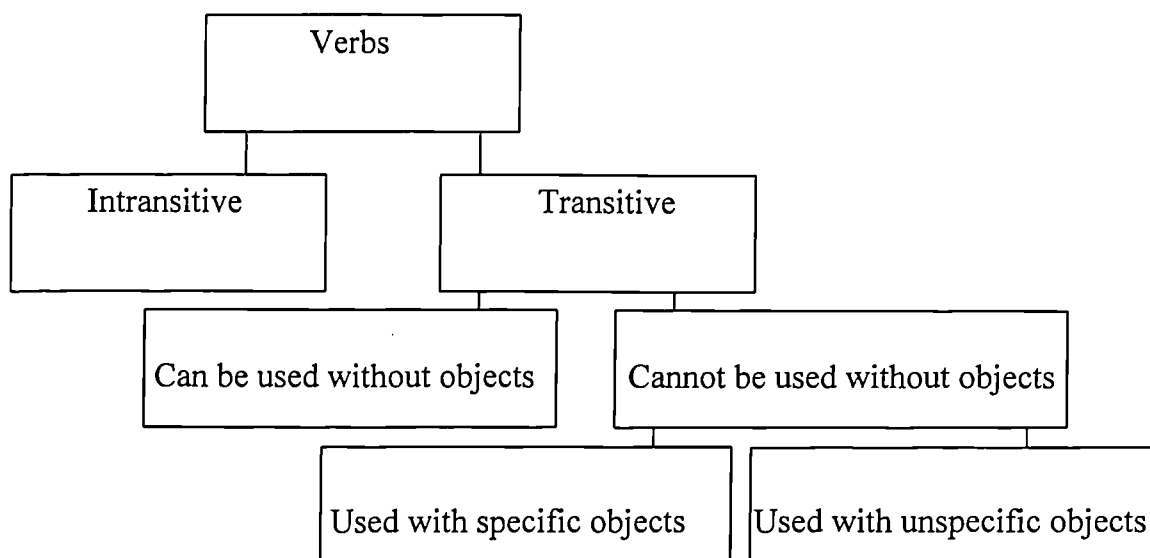
one who resembles you in nobility and generosity

Here, the verb *talaba* is a transitive verb that needs a direct object, but this direct object has been ellipited to convey the meaning that no one is similar to the person who is the subject of this poem. Had the direct object been mentioned, the sentence would have become

*qad talabnâ laka mithlâ*

but this would imply that there are other people who are similar to the person being glorified in this poem, and this was not what the poet wanted to say. Hence the poet ellipited the direct object to convey the meaning that there is no one like the man he is describing.

As can be seen in the examples above, in order to cover all the cases where the direct object can be ellipited for rhetorical purposes, al-Jurjânî classifies transitive verbs into two main divisions: (1) transitive verbs that can be used without objects, and (2) transitive verbs that normally have objects. These verbs are divided into two groups; (a) those that are used with specific objects, and (b) those whose objects are unspecific as the figure below shows:



Thus, we find that the Arabic rhetorical theory associates ellipsis of the direct object with the speaker's desire to convey meaning very clearly. In other words, the general context and the relationship between the various words in the sentence structure determine whether the direct object should or should not be ellipsed. Although the majority of treatises in Arabic rhetoric begin by a general discussion of grammar, the intention is actually to argue that the scope of grammatical analysis is limited to isolated sentences and to postulate that grammatical analysis is not helpful when contextual aspects are taken into consideration. Arab rhetoricians were very keen to show that once in the realm of text and discourse grammatical rules were not helpful and that contextual factors were fundamental to show the nature and the motivation behind the set of choices language users make when they use language in real communicative situations.

It is clear, then, that when dealing with ellipsis, Arab rhetoricians explored the rhetorical purposes of the sentence and the circumstances in which ellipsis is more eloquent. These purposes are summarised in the following table.

RHETORICAL PURPOSES	FUNCTION OF ELLIPTED ELEMENT
1 Shortening	<i>musnad ilayh, musnad and fadlah</i>
2 Concentration of the meaning of the verb on the subject	<i>Fadlah</i>
3 Broadening of the meaning of the verb	<i>Fadlah</i>
4 Strengthening of the meaning	<i>musnad ilayh, musnad and fadlah</i>

It should be noted here that the Arabic linguistic tradition did not address the issue of the semantic structure of sentences particularly the semantic relations which relate the verb to its governed elements. It is only by the efforts of rhetoricians like al-Jurjânî that this aspect began to be discussed.

## 6.6 Non-ellipsis

Arab rhetoricians use the term *dhikr* to denote a certain element in a sentence the ellipsis of which is not allowed and which therefore must be mentioned (i.e. the presence of this element in the sentence is more eloquent than its ellipsis). This is the case especially where the indicators of element's assumed presence would be weak were it to be ellipted. If the indicators are not illustrative, the speaker or writer may fear that the intended meaning may not be clear to the addressee (cf. Abû Mûsâ 1979: 150; 'Abd al-Muttalib 1994: 326; al-Hawwârî 1995: 90).

The subject of the nominal sentence must be mentioned in cases such as the following. If someone asks

*hal 'âda Zayd-un min al-safar ?*

Has Zayd returned from his travel?

and the person who has been asked the question is busy and cannot answer the question until some time has elapsed, he should then answer:

*Zayd-un 'âda min al-safar*

Zayd has returned from his travel.

The subject must be mentioned in this case to avoid confusion (cf. al-Jundî [n. d.]: 74; Amîn 1990: 132; Qalqîlah 1992: 190).

Another instance in which it is more eloquent to mention the subject of the nominal sentence than to delete it is when the speaker or writer wishes, for psychological or sociological reasons, to emphasise his personal admiration of the subject, as in the following lines:

*alâ layta shi'rî hal abîtanî laylat-an*

*bi-janb-i al-ghadâ uzjî al-qilâs-a al-nawâjjiyâ*

*fa-layta al-ghadâ lam yaqta '-i al-rakb-u 'ardahu*

*wa layta al-ghadâ mâshâ al-rikâb-a layâliyâ*

*laqad kâna fî ahl-i al-ghadâ law danâ al-ghadâ*

*mazâr-un wa lâkinna al-ghadâ laysa dânyâ*

I wish I could spend a night

beside the trees speaking to the fast camels

I wish the trees [in my home] had not been passed



and I wish these trees had followed us for many nights

The place where the trees and our people [are] would be

[the site] of our frequent visits if it were close, but it is not

Abû Mûsâ (1979: 151) comments on the fact that the subject is mentioned many times in these lines as follows:

*wa al-ghadâ shajar-un fî diyâr-i ahlih wa al-shâ'ir-u fî hâdhih-i al-hâlah al-nafsiyyah al-qâsiyah allatî yastash'ir-u fihâ dunuww-a al-ajal wa yasta'ir-u fihâ al-ihsâs-a bi-al-ghurbah wa yafîd-u fihâ al-hanîn-u wa al-ta'alluq bi al-ahl-i tarâhu murtabî-a al-nafs-i aqwâ mâ yakûn-u al-irtibât fa-yatashabbath-u bi-al-lafz-i fa-yadhkuruhu wa yukarriruhu*

*Al-ghadâ* is a tree in the poet's family home and the poet is in a bad psychological state because he feels that he is going to die soon. His condition has aroused his emotions and sense of being away from home, and has made him passionately long for the love of his family. So he resorts to words, to relieve his pain by repeating them.

Another case in which the mentioning of the subject of the nominal sentence is more eloquent than its ellipsis is when the speaker or writer wishes to attract the attention of the addressee, as in the following Qur'ânic verse (20, 17–18):

*wa mâ tilka bi-yamînika yâ mûsâ qâla hiya 'asâya atawakka'-u 'alayhâ wa âhushsh-u bihâ 'alâ ghanamî wa lî fihâ ma'ârib-u ukhrâ*

And what is that in thy right hand, O Moses? He said, "It is my rod: on it I lean; with it I beat down fodder for my flocks; and in it I find other uses.

The reply of the prophet Moses could have been simply

*'aṣā*

a stick

but he went on to mention the grammatical subject of the sentence in order to place emphasis upon it (cf. al-Sakkâkî 1937: 85; al-Hawwârî 1995: 91).

The purpose of mentioning the subject may also be to emphasise the verb, as in this Qur'ânic verse (13, 5):

*ulâ'ika alladhîna kafarû bi-rabbihim wa ulâ'ika al-aghlâl-u fî  
a'nâqihim wa ulâ'ika aṣḥâb-u al-nâr-i hum fihâ khâlidûn*

They are those who deny their Lord. They are those round whose necks will be yokes (of servitude). They will be companion of the Fire to dwell therein (for aye)

Here, the subject of the nominal sentence *ulâ'ika* is repeated every time in order to emphasise the statement insistently (cf. Abû Mûsâ 1979: 155).

As far as the predicate is concerned, Arab rhetoricians argue that the general principle is to mention it, as in:

*Zayd-un shujâ'-un*

Zayd is brave

Sometimes, however, it is necessary to mention the predicate because it is more expressive of the required meaning, as in the following Qur'ânic verse (43, 9):

*wa la'in sa'altahum man khalaqa al-samâwât-i wa al-'ard-a la-  
yaqûlunna khalaqahunna al-'azîz-u al-'alîm*

If thou were to question them, "Who created the Heavens and the Earth?" they would be sure to reply they were created by Him, the exalted in power, full of knowledge.

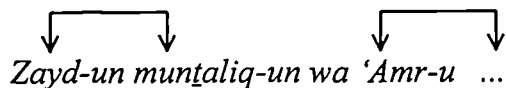
Here, the correlate of the attribute *khalaqa* is mentioned to add more clarity and strength (cf. Qalqîlah 1992: 192; Abû Mûsâ 1979: 257).

The predicate should also be mentioned if it is a verb, as in the following example:

*Zayd-un muntaliq-un wa 'Amr-u yantaliq-u*

Zayd is running and 'Amr is about to run

Here, the predicate *yantaliq* is mentioned to express the actual occurrence of the action of the verb. If the predicate is ellipted, the example becomes:

  
*Zayd-un muntaliq-un wa 'Amr-u ...*

This causes confusion, and the addressee might think that the ellipted predicate is an active participle. In this case the sentence fails to convey the accurate meaning of the verbs (cf. Abû Mûsâ 1979: 258; 'Abd al-Muttalib 1994: 328).

Arab rhetoricians have dealt with sentences in which non-ellipsis is more eloquent than if ellipsis were practised. They emphasise that non-ellipsis is the basic general principle, and that the basic elements of the sentence should all be mentioned. The linguistic system permits ellipsis of particular elements only if they can be recovered by an indicator (*dalīl*) which can be understood from the other elements or from the general context in which the elliptical sentence is uttered.

Although the linguistic system permits ellipsis, the speaker or writer may choose not to practise it in order to fulfil a rhetorical purpose, which may be to glorify the *musnad ilayh*, as in

*al-‘ālim-u ḥāḍir-un*

The scholar is present

or to show contempt for the *musnad ilayh* as in

*al-sāriq-u ḥāḍir-un*

The thief is present

In the first example, the purpose of mentioning the *musnad ilayh* is to demonstrate his character to the listener, which is a form of glorifying. In the second example, the speaker insists on mentioning the *musnad ilayh* in order to show his contempt for him and to associate him with stealing. Thus if the speaker loves the listener, mentioning all the elements of the sentence is more eloquent

than ellipsis, because the speaker desires to talk more about the person he loves, so that in this case ellipsis would be inappropriate. Consider the following:

*ayna Zayd-un?*

Where is Zayd?

If you loved the person who is asking the question, you would say:

*Zayd-un fî al-sûq*

Zayd is in the market

In other words, you would mention the *musnad ilayh* and not ellip any element from the sentence. If on the other hand, you hated the person who is asking the question and did not enjoy talking to him for any length of time, you would prefer ellipsis, and then you would say, deleting the *musnad ilayh*:

*fî al-sûq-i*

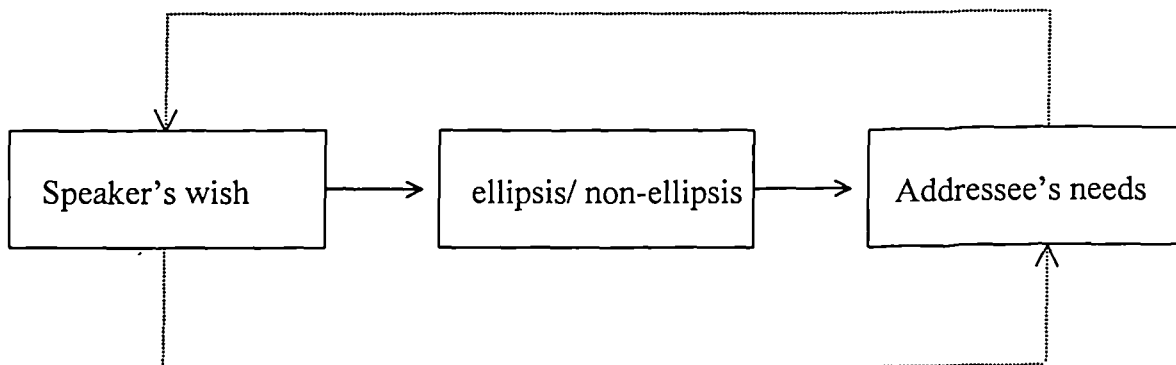
The speaker or writer may deliberately mention all the elements of the sentence because he or she feels that the listener requires it, as in the following Qur'ânic verse:

*wa daraba la-nâ mathal-an wa nasiya khalqahu qâla man yuhyî al-  
'izâm-a wa hiya ramîm. qul yuhyîhâ al-ladhî ansha'ahâ awwal-a  
marrah*

And he makes comparisons for us, and forgets his own [origin and] creation: He says "Who can give life to [dry] bones and decomposed ones [at that]? Say He will give them life who created them for the first time.

Here, the Qur'ân insists on mentioning the *musnad*, which is the verb *yuhyî*. The purpose of this to prove that bringing someone to life again can be done only by God; The Qur'ân also means to imply that God knows that the listeners do not know this clearly.

One can conclude that Arabic rhetorical theory emphasises that the ellipsis or non-ellipsis of elements from a sentence depends on the close relationship that should exist between what the speaker intends and the situation of the listener. The more the speaker is familiar with the condition of the listener, the better able he or she will be to select either ellipsis or non-ellipsis. Correspondingly, the listener should be aware of the intentions of the speaker or writer in employing ellipsis or non-ellipsis. The diagram below illustrates this relationship:



It is clear from the examples given by Arab rhetoricians that they consider ellipsis or non-ellipsis to serve semantic purposes in many ways. It has been shown that there are many options for the speaker or writer, either to omit or to include certain components in the sentence depending on the circumstances. Sometimes it is ellipsis of the certain element that makes the meaning accurate.

The above does not imply that the speaker or writer is always free to omit any element. Rather, ellipsis or non-ellipsis of elements is tied to the context.

Later Arab linguists advanced an interest in semantics. One of the reasons was the need of linguists to explain why different case endings appear whenever similar elements occur in similar syntactic environments. In this regard al-Jurjânî adopted new methodology and used his own terminology to explain the semantic aspects of different elements in the sentence and how these different structural elements create different meaning. One can also gather from al-Jurjânî's analyses of elliptical sentences the factors that help the composer of the sentence to choose the most appropriate syntactical construction. These factors include all the elements of the wider context in which the communication process takes place. The knowledge shared or unshared between the speaker and the listener is the most important of these factors. In considering it, al-Jurjânî reminded us of a number of principles that closely correlate with some corresponding ideas in modern linguistic particularly in the functional school of linguistics.

## **6.7 Comparison of al-Jurjânî's approach to ellipsis with that of Halliday and Hasan**

There is no doubt that the Arabic linguistic tradition contains very valuable models for analysing the Arabic language. Arab linguists have expended on the Arabic language their utmost care, and by most standards their ideas on this subject are very advanced in relation to the era in which they lived.

As was made clear in Chapter Five of this study, Arabic grammar has traditionally studied ellipsis occurring within the sentence. Nevertheless, succeeding Arab rhetoricians tried to do more than that. Al-Jurjânî, for example, attempted to study texts that are larger than a sentence, and indicated that these texts should be treated as a single unit. When discussing the issue of ellipsis, Al-Jurjânî tries to emphasise the fact that ellipsis of some element(s) of the sentence may affect the comprehensive understanding of the larger text. This is clear from the following:

*fa-ta'ammal hâdhih-i al-abyât kullahâ wa istaqrihâ wâhid-an wâhid-an wa unzur ilâ mawqi'ihâ fî nafsik wa ilâ mâ tajiduhu min al-zurf-i wa al-lutf idh anta mararta bi-mawdi' al-hadhf-i minhâ*

Consider all these lines of poetry and read them one by one, and notice their effect on you and what you find of the beauty created by ellipsis.

This tendency in the Arabic linguistic tradition underpins my decision to compare al-Jurjânî's work with the work of Halliday and Hasan, whose study is considered one of the best of those that include a thorough study of ellipsis. Moreover, the rhetoricians' approach to ellipsis, as represented by Al-Jurjânî's work, denotes an advanced stage in traditional Arabic linguistic thinking, hence



my preference for comparing it with a modern linguistic approach.<sup>1</sup>

Halliday and Hasan are concerned with the study of the linguistic meaning of texts, whether at the level of the sentence or of that of a group of sentences in a larger text. This is equivalent to the concern shown by Arab rhetoricians, who turned their attention to such linguistic meaning when they found that it was being neglected by grammarians.

The view that it is possible to compare al-Jurjânî's theory with that put forward in some by modern linguistics is not that of the present writer alone, but is also advocated by a number of contemporary Arab linguists. Among them is Muhammad Mandour (n. d.: 185),<sup>2</sup> who says:

*manhaj-u 'Abdul Qâhir al-Jurjânî yastanid-u ilâ nazariyyat-in tumâshî mâ waṣala ilayh-i 'ilm-u al-liṣân-i al-ḥadîth-i min ârâ' fa-qad qarrara fih-i 'Abdul Qâhir mâ qarrarahu 'ulamâ'-u al-yawm-i min ramziyyat-i al-lughah wa min anna al-lughat-a laysat illâ majmû'at-an min al-'alâqât*

The methodology of 'Abdul Qâhir is based on a theory which matches what has been achieved in contemporary linguistics. In his methodology 'Abdul Qâhir has ascertained what present day scholars

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<sup>1</sup> This comparison is restricted to a discussion of the material given in Halliday and Hasan's book *Cohesion in English* and al-Jurjânî's book *Dalâ'il al-I'jâz*. It is not intended as a comparison between all the works of these scholars.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Bayshak (1991: 72).

have ascertained concerning the symbolic nature of language and the affirmation that language is no more than a bundle of relations.

Halliday and Hasan (1995: 4) define cohesion as:

a semantic one [relation]; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text.

Cohesion occurs where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one presupposes the other, in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it. When this happens a relation of cohesion is set up, and the other two elements, the presupposing and the presupposed, are thereby at least potentially integrated into a text.

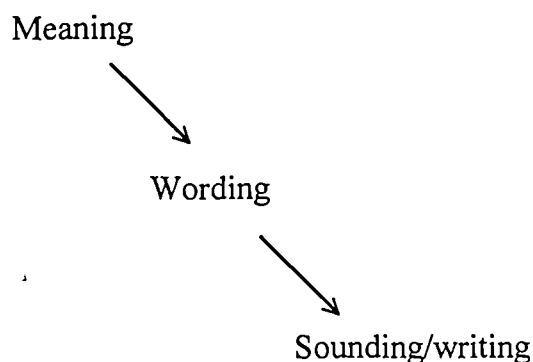
We can see clearly the resemblance between this definition and al-Jurjânî's (1984: 93):

*wa i'lam anna min mâ huwa aṣl-un fî an yadiqq-a al-nzar wa yaghmiḍ al-maslak fî tawakkhkhî al-ma'ânî allatî 'arafat: an tattahid-a ajzâ'-u al-kalâm-i wa yadkhul-a ba'ḍuhâ fî ba'ḍ wa yashtadd-a irtibât-u thâni minhâ bi-awwal wa an tahtâj-a fî al-jumlah ilâ an tadda'ahâ fî al-naḥs-i waḍ'-an wâhid-an wa an yakûn-a ḥâluka fihâ ḥâl-u al-bânî yaḍ'-u bi-yamînih hâhunâ fî ḥâl-i mâ yaḍ'-u bi-yasârih-i hunâk. na'am wa fî ḥâl-i mâ yubṣar-u makân-un thâlith-un wa râbi'-un yaḍa'uhumâ bayna al-awwalayn. wa laysa li-mâ sha'nuhu an yajî'-a 'alâ ḥâdhâ al-waṣf hadd-un yahsuruh wa qânûn-un yuhîṭ-u bihi, fa-innahu yajî'-u 'alâ wujûh-in shattâ wa anḥâ' mukhtalifah*

Know that what constitutes a principle must be thoroughly examined. It is difficult to know the origin of meanings which have become known: parts of the speech must be united and fused with one another;

the bond of the second part with the first part is strengthened. You need to put the sentence in one place in your mind. You must be like a builder; he places [some bricks] with his right hand here and [others] with his left hand there. Yes, and if he sees a third or fourth place he places them between the first two. The expressions which can be described in this way have no limit and are governed by no rule, because they occur in various forms and various places.

It is evident from the writings of al-Jurjânî on the one hand and Halliday and Hasan on the other that they agree about text cohesion and on the means by which this cohesion can be achieved.<sup>1</sup> They consider ellipsis to be one of the most important devices for achieving textual cohesion. Halliday and Hasan (1995: 5), for example, regard language as a multiple coding system consisting of three levels, the meaning, the wording, and the sounding or writing, thus:



This is a similar concept to that embraced by al-Jurjânî (1984: 417), who argues that words are used for conveying meaning. He emphasises that they are

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<sup>1</sup> What is meant by the term text here is the linguistic material, whether written or expressed (see Morley 1985: 2).

used as signs for meanings, and asks how it is possible to imagine that words precede meanings.

Thus, the two works agree that the cohesion of the whole text is achieved at the semantic level of language, and in their view words are no more than bearers of the meanings stored in the mind of the speaker or writer. The two works also appear to agree that words and grammar exist to serve meaning because grammar expresses general meanings while words express specific meanings.

The main differences between Halliday and Hasan's and al-Jurjânî's work lie in the fact that Halliday and Hasan's work deals mainly with the study of the text, its cohesion and the elements which make it cohesive, whereas al-Jurjânî's work deals with general linguistic issues and has a number of objectives, perhaps the most important of which is analysis of the language of the Qur'ân. In other words, al-Jurjânî's work tries to prove that the level of the Qur'anic language and the cohesion of the Qur'anic text is of such high quality that it is inimitable. Nevertheless, he does not restrict himself to studying the literal texts, but goes on to analyse the pragmatic aspects of the language.

Halliday and Hasan study each of the devices used in textual cohesion comprehensively, giving examples wherever possible and mentioning what distinguishes each device from the others. Al-Jurjânî, on the other hand, tends to generalise and fails to differentiate between devices. If he deals with a specific device, he leaves the impression that other devices perform the same function as the one in question.

Halliday and Hasan cover most of the devices used in text cohesion in the English language, including reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion. Al-Jurjânî covers fewer devices; these include fronting and backing, definiteness and indefiniteness, ellipsis, and conjunction and disjunction.

Halliday and Hasan (1995: 87, 142) deal with ellipsis as it concerns the relationship between the parts of the text at the level of words and grammar but not at the level of meaning. After explaining the term “reference” as the existing relationship at the level of meaning, they arrive at the conclusion that both ellipsis and substitution refer to the relationship at the level of words and grammar. They summarise this view (1987: 89) as follows:

Type of cohesive relation	Linguistic level
Reference	Semantic
Substitution (including ellipsis)	Grammatical

They demonstrate ellipsis using the following example:

*This is a fine hall you have here. I've never lectured in a finer*

Here one would theoretically expect the word *hall* to be present at the end of the second sentence.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the concept of ellipsis as discussed by Halliday and Hasan, and more examples, see Halliday (1997: 316–17).

Contrary to the view of Halliday and Hasan, al-Jurjânî considers ellipsis to be a relationship at the level of meaning. In other words, he considers sentences from which a certain element has been ellipted as more eloquent and more expressive of the required meaning if this is in agreement with the circumstances in which the sentence was said, irrespective of its grammatical function. This is clear from the following (1984: 152–153):

*fa-mâ min ism-in aw fi 'l-in tajiduhu qad hudhifa thumma uṣība bih-i  
mawḍi'uhu wa hudhifa fi al-hâl-i al-latī yanbaghī an yuḥḍaf-a fihâ  
illâ wa anta tajid-u ḥadhfaḥ-u hunâka aḥsana min dhikrih*

Wherever a noun or a verb has been ellipted, and the indication of its position has been gauged correctly and it has been ellipted in a situation where it should be ellipted, you will find that its ellipsis in that situation is better than its being mentioned.

In short, Halliday and Hasan deal with ellipsis as a cohesive device binding the text together. They conceive the linguistic system as using grammar to regulate elements in the text which allow the speaker or writer to produce linguistic expressions characterised by the interdependence of the various elements on each other. This is what Halliday and Hasan call “cohesion”, and they mention a number of devices which help in the achieving of this interdependence between elements. One of the most important of these devices is ellipsis, which means the use of fewer expressed elements. These expressed elements are understood from the general text. In other words, what Halliday and Hasan call “cohesion” al-Jurjânî (1984: 4) calls *ta'liq* (grammatical relations).

Thus, according to Halliday and Hasan ellipsis is a “cohesive device”, while to al-Jurjânî it is a set of grammatical relations performing the role of a “cohesive device” (cf. Bayshak 1991: 100; Sweity 1992: 109; Obeidat 1994: 369).

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

This study has discussed a number of different aspects of Arabic linguistic thought regarding sentence analysis, with particular reference to elliptical sentences. It has included an account of the two main branches of Arabic linguistics, grammar and rhetoric. This final chapter summarises the most important findings of the study. It is divided into three sections. The first section presents the major findings. The second section deals with some additional findings associated with the broader subject of the study, and the third section puts forward some recommendations for further studies.

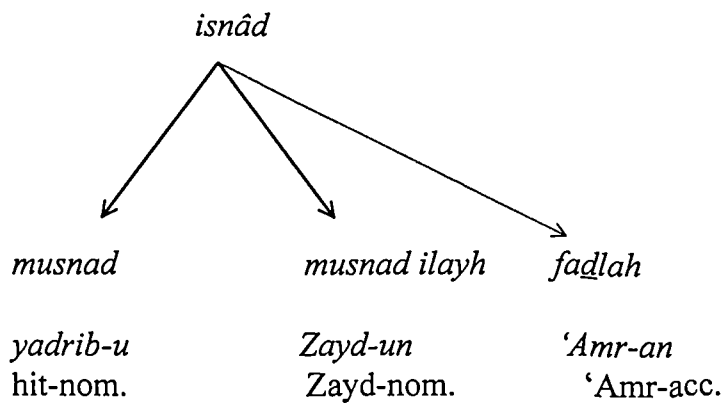
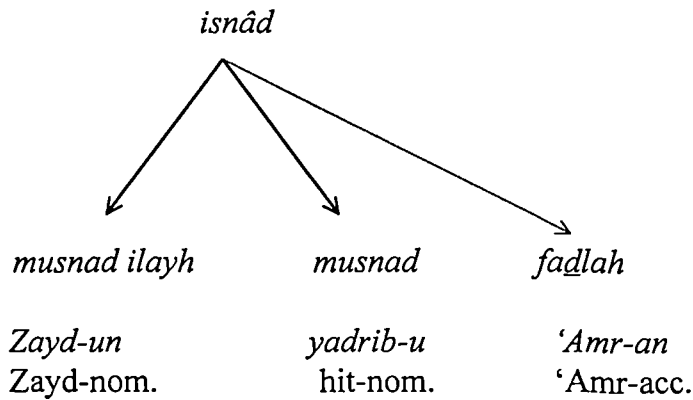
#### 7.1 Major findings

The primary aim of this study has been to provide a better understanding of the syntactic and semantic aspects of sentence analysis in the Arabic linguistic tradition, with particular reference to ellipsis. The main findings of the study can be summarised as follows.

Arabic linguistic theory calls the basic elements of both the verbal Arabic sentence and the nominal Arabic sentence *al-musnad ilayh* (the correlate of the attribute) and *al-musnad* (the attribute). These are indispensable elements, and no sentence can be formed without both of them. Strictly speaking, neither *al-musnad ilayh* nor *al-musnad* can be ellipped from a sentence. If the apparent



structure of the sentence implies that either of them is ellipted, their presence must be assumed. This is why Arab linguists call them '*umdah* (indispensable elements). Other elements in the sentence are regarded as additional elements that can be ellipted, and it is not necessary to assume their presence. This is why Arab linguists call them *faḍlah* (redundant elements). The relationship created between all the elements is called *isnâd* (attribution), which is strongest between *al-musnad ilayh* and *al-musnad*. This can be indicated diagrammatically as follows:



Zayd hits 'Amr

Arab grammarians and rhetoricians all accept the theory of government ('*amal*), which divides words into (1) governing elements ('*awâmil*) and (2)

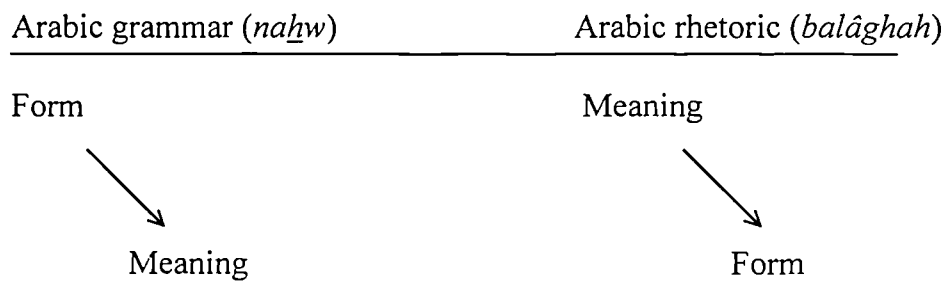
governed elements (*ma'mûlât*). Arab linguists applied this theory in all their analyses of the Arabic sentence, and paid considerable attention to the uses of ellipsis that they studied by using this theory; nevertheless none of them explicitly mentioned the principles of this theory. The firm belief of Arab linguists in this theory, including that of Sibawayh (180/796), is confirmed by this study. In fact, it can be claimed that all traditional Arabic grammar books contained the concept of '*amal* (government) in some detail, but with noticeable differences.

The Arabic theory of government ('*amal*) regards verbs primarily as expressed governing elements in the sentence. The power of the verb to operate on nouns is explained in details because it has always been the most important aspects of the traditional Arabic linguistic theory.

Arab grammarians introduced very strict rules, which in many cases forced them to determine some ellipped elements in the sentence not usually required by the meaning. They did this simply to comply with the requirements of the theory of government. There is, in fact, no necessity to determine many of the elements they assumed as being ellipped.

The attention of Arab grammarians seem to have focused mainly on the form of the sentence, without giving priority to the meaning. Parsing signs (*i'râb*) appear to have received the greater part of their analytical attention, at the expense of semantic aspects. The early traditional grammatical theory had been slightly improved to include an analytical explanation of the Arabic sentence and

strong relationships between the main elements in the sentence. This progress did not contradict the basic traditional rules. To some extent, it provided good explanation of the relations between different sentential elements. The semantic relations that relate certain elements to others did not receive much attention in early Arabic syntactic theory. This however, completely changed after the appearance of rhetorical studies; since Arab rhetoricians emphasised the role of semantics in sentence analysis. The diagram below indicates the different emphasis Arab grammarians and rhetoricians have placed upon form and meaning.



The main aim of the grammarians was purely educational, and this led them to make a number of rational judgements which sometimes ignored the actual situation of the language. The prime concern of Arab rhetoricians, on the other hand, was to go beyond this to discover the precise meaning of individual sentences and to link this with the particular circumstances in which those sentences are used. This is probably why they adopted the general principle of *li-kull-i maqâm-in maqâl* (For every occasion there are right words). In other words, while grammarians start with the individual words and end with the sentence,

rhetoricians deal with other linguistic elements which are either touched upon only slightly by grammarians or else have not been treated by them at all.

By the end of the fifth/eleventh century, analysis of the Arabic sentence reached the stage of maturity when rhetoricians began to emphasise the role of semantic relations between different elements in the sentence construction. As was shown in Chapter Six, Al-Jurjânî examined the deep semantic relationships between different elements in the sentence. Al-Jurjani's work on sentence analysis did not explicitly conflict with the early Arabic grammatical theory although he intended to propose a new approach of sentence analysis. Instead, Al-Jurjânî complemented the already existing traditional grammatical scholarship by proposing another parallel way of analysing the relationship between different sentential elements.

Arab rhetoricians did not confine themselves to the study of ellipsis at the sentence level as grammarians did, but they periodically went further, to deal with larger texts. Al-Jurjânî's approach to ellipsis is the best example of this. There are similarities to be found between his work and the work of Halliday and Hasan on this linguistic phenomenon.

The comparison of the work on ellipsis of Halliday and Hasan (1976) and al-Jurjânî (471/1078) has revealed that al-Jurjânî attaches more importance to the rhetorical purposes of ellipsis, while Halliday and Hasan do not mention this at all. This is because al-Jurjânî's studies are concerned with the question of eloquence. His aim was to fill the gaps he found in studies dealing with Arabic grammar, and so he included analysis at the sentence level and the text level.

Halliday and Hasan, on the other hand, have been more concerned with the development of a new aspect of linguistic study, which is sometimes called “text linguistics”.

Later, Arab grammarians did not confine themselves to Arabic grammar only but related their sentence analysis also to some aspects of rhetoric. Ibn Hishâm (761/1359), for example, in his book *Mughnî al-labîb ‘an kutub-i al-a‘ârîb* gives meaning its proper place when he deals with elliptical sentences. That is to say, he does not confine himself to the apparent structure, but links semantics with syntax in arguing that it is impossible to identify an element ellipted from a sentence unless an indicator of it is present. This indicator could be understood either from the grammatical construction or from the meaning (non-grammatical indicator).

Some late grammarians such as Ibn Maḍâ’ al-Qurṭubî (592/1195) have attempted to break with some of the strict rules of grammar which give form more importance than the overall meaning of the sentence. Ibn Maḍâ’ has criticised the linguists’ exaggeration of the assumption of elements ellipted from the Arabic sentence. He has also criticised their exaggeration of the use of causation and analogy (cf. Levin 1995; Versteegh 1997a: 140-152; Abdejaber 1985; Wolfe 1984; Amaireh 1987).

Perhaps Ibn Maḍâ’ was right to make these criticisms, because Arab linguists have exaggerated a great deal in many of their rational analyses, and this has in many instances forced them to assume the presence of too many ellipted

elements. In other words, it is possible to adopt a method of sentence analysis which does not need to assume elements ellipted from the structure of sentences.

The aims of the rhetoricians, as typified by Al-Jurjânî, in analysing sentences were more comprehensive than those of the grammarians. The rhetoricians set out a means by which they could find a suitable alternative to the theory of government and could analyse sentences. In doing this they gave psychological and sociological factors the attention they deserve. Al-Jurjânî, for example, considers language as a tool of communication between people in the same speech community. Elliptical sentences are given specific semantic values to improve the pure syntactic analysis produced by grammarians. This new dimension of sentence analysis can be considered as a breakthrough in the whole Arabic linguistic theory.

Arabic grammar (*naḥw*) and Arabic rhetoric (*balāghah*) should not be treated as entirely separate subjects; rather, they should be treated as closely related. In other words, any Arabic linguistic phenomenon, including ellipsis, should be treated in accordance with both subjects because each of them complements the other. Arabic grammar studies structure while Arabic rhetoric concentrates on semantics. It was a gross mistake in the past of early Arab linguists to separate these two subjects. I have tried, during the analysis of elliptical sentences in this study, to show the importance of linking these two subjects.

The concept of *asl* (origin) and *far'* (branch) is relied upon heavily by both Arab grammarians and rhetoricians. While grammarians apply this concept at the

level of sentence structure and of grammatical correctness of the sentence, rhetoricians apply it at the level of the overall meaning of the sentence.

The grammarians claim that two levels of sentence structure should be inferred: the apparent structure and the assumed structure. The assumed structure allows the analysis of the apparent structure to be implemented in such a way that the function of each element in the sentence becomes clear. Rhetoricians, on the other hand, suggest that two levels of sentence meaning should be assumed: first, the basic meaning (*aṣl al-ma'nâ*), which they regard as a principal meaning from which other, secondary meanings may be derived. This assumption helps to establish the overall meaning of each type of sentence.

## 7.2 Additional findings

In addition to the major findings presented above, this study has produced some additional findings. These are associated mainly with the broader subject of the study and may be summarised as follows.

Arab linguists, both grammarians and rhetoricians, have agreed almost unanimously on a number of basic principles on which they rely heavily in their study of the sentence. These principles include, as set out in this study, are *qiyâs* (analogy), and *ta'lîl* (causation).

The incorrect use of the Arabic language following the expansion of Islam to outside the Arabian peninsula and the conversion of many non-Arabs (*a'âjim*) to Islam was one of the main factors behind the initiation and development of Arabic linguistics. Motivated by fear and anxiety about their language, Arab linguists considered this problem to be one requiring urgent attention. Thus, it

was that they built up many elements of their linguistic thought. Thus we find that studies during this period concentrate on parsing signs (*'alâmât al-i'râb*) more than on any other issue in Arabic sentence analysis. In this context, Sibawayh's book may be regarded as the best example of such a study, since it deals extensively with parsing signs as its main theme.

When collecting linguistic material, Arab linguists have depended more on poetry than on prose and ordinary Arabic speech. This again leads us to conclude that some of the findings their studies arrived at primarily concern Arabic poetry and cannot be generalised from this to include the Arabic language as a whole. The reason Arab linguists placed such emphasis on poetry was perhaps the ease of collecting it, because the Arab nation generally was interested in poetry.

There are major differences between the grammatical schools in terms of the methodologies used in their sentence analyses. But despite these differences, the style of writing of these schools remained similar. Moreover, there are also similarities in the general aims of these writings, all of which are intended to have an educational value. The majority of Arab grammarians were influenced by Sibawayh's book. Any similarities to be found in the writings of the rhetoricians, on the other hand, are not on the same scale as those between the writings of the grammarians. The rhetoricians made serious attempts to improve studies which deal with sentence analysis, the best example of this being al-Jurjânî's *Dalâ'il al-I'jâz*.

There are some similarities between the Arabic rhetorical approach to ellipsis and some aspects of the functionalist school approach, in terms of the way



both treat the language from the point of view of (1) its communicative function and (2) the coherence between the elements in the sentence on the basis of the functions performed by each of these elements.

Most Arabic linguistic studies, especially those concerned with sentence structure, revolve around the study of the holy Qur'ân and its various readings. This is because the Qur'ân is regarded by all Arab linguists as offering the best material for linguistic study. Arab linguists tested most of their rules against the text of the Qur'ân and did not pay much attention to the Arabic language in general or to its various spoken dialects. This leads us to infer that the conclusions reached by some Arab grammarians apply primarily to the language of the Qur'ân.

Some Arabic grammatical studies expanded the rational foundations to such an extent that they broke away from Qur'ânic and poetic texts. The presence of a large number of linguistic schools fuelled competition between these schools in terms of rational explanations, and this at times resulted in a deviation from the main object for which linguistic studies were established in the first place.

### **7.3 Recommendations for further study**

As various parts of the preceding sections of this study have revealed, the Arabic linguistic tradition is rich and still presents many areas that need to be explored and carefully studied. Some of the issues which I believe need to be studied further are summarised in the following paragraphs.

During the preparation of this study I became convinced that the issue of linguistic terminology is one of those most deserving of investigation. It is still

very difficult to find terms in contemporary linguistics that correspond to traditional Arabic linguistic terms. Equally, there are some contemporary linguistic terms which have no corresponding terms in Arabic linguistic traditions. Thus, a comparative study comparing traditional Arabic linguistic terms with contemporary linguistic terms would represent a useful contribution to this field.

The theory of government (*'amal*) which dominated Arabic linguistic thinking and provided the basis for logical analysis of the cohesion between the elements of a sentence, as well as the function each of these elements serves in the sentence, is another area which deserves separate study.

This study has also made reference to the influence of sectarian Islamic jurisprudence, as evidenced by the call for the abolition of the theory of government and the principle of *qiyās* by Ibn Maḍā' al-Qurṭubī, in accordance with his sectarian religious teaching. The influence of the various Islamic sects on Arabic linguistic studies seems to be an area that has so far escaped the attention of Arab linguists. At present, all that is discernible in this regard is a passing reference to this influence, without any proper quantification of its magnitude or indication of its direction.

The material which Arab linguists used in their studies is somewhat questionable, and no satisfactory answers have been given as to why pioneering linguists used the same material in their studies. Examples given by these linguists are repeated in almost all traditional studies. Thus a study dealing with these concerns should be conducted in order to address the uncertainties involved.

The devotion of a whole study to a general comparison between linguistic studies in the field of grammar and those in the field of rhetoric is to be recommended. This might consider the way in which each group has dealt with sentence analysis and with the analysis of the text in general. Such a comparative study might discuss the basic linguistic principles on which each group bases its arguments as well as the aims of each group from the point of view of the study of language. All the above areas need to be investigated, since there is a shortage of information about them not only in the Western world, but in the Arab world as well.

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## GLOSSARY OF LINGUISTIC TERMS

One of the major difficulties I faced during the preparation of this study was the fact that traditional Arabic linguistics contain a large number of terms that are difficult to translate directly into English. Despite the fact that it is imprecise to use modern linguistic terms to express traditional Arabic concepts, such terms are needed. For the sake of accuracy whenever a modern linguistic term is used in this study it is accompanied by the traditional Arabic term in italics.

The following books were particularly useful in helping me devise suitable English terms:

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'alâmât i'râbiyyah	Parsing sings
'alamiyyah	Being a proper name
'amal	Government
'âmil	regent, governing element
'ârid	accidental
'atf bayân	syndetic explicative
'atf nasaq	connection of sequence
'ilal nazariyyah	hypothetical motives
'ilal qiâsiyyah	analogical motives
'ilal ta'lîmiyyah	instructional motives
'illah	cause, motive
'umdah	indispensable element
'unṣur mahdhûf	ellipted element
adâh	particle
amr	imperative
an al-mufasssrah	explicative <i>an</i>
aṣl	basic norm
athar	effect
badal	substitute
bahr	metre
balîgh	eloquent
blâghah	rhetoric
ḍamîr	pronoun
ḍamîr al-sha'n	pronoun of fact

<i>damîr munfaşil</i>	detached pronoun
<i>damir muttaşil</i>	attached pronoun
<i>dawâm</i>	permanence
<i>faḍlah</i>	extra element
<i>fi'l dhamm</i>	verb of blame
<i>fi'l ghayr muta'addî</i>	intransitive verb
<i>fi'l muta'dî</i>	transitive verb
<i>fi'l nâqis</i>	defective verb
<i>fi'l ta'ajjub</i>	verb of surprise or wonder
<i>hâ al-sakt</i>	<i>ha</i> of pause or of silence
<i>hadd</i>	definition
<i>hadhf</i>	ellipsis
<i>hâl</i>	circumstantial accusative
<i>hâlah; wajh</i>	case
<i>harf</i>	particle
<i>harf istifhâm</i>	interrogative particle
<i>harf 'illah</i>	weak letter
<i>harf al-shart</i>	conditional particle
<i>harf jar</i>	preposition
<i>harf nafi</i>	negative particle
<i>hudûth</i>	transience
<i>hujjah</i>	proof
<i>hurûf al-mu'jam</i>	letters of the alphabet
<i>hurûf al-ta'lîl</i>	causative particles
<i>hurûf lathawiyyah</i>	gingival letters
<i>hurûf qamariyyah</i>	lunar letters
<i>ibtidâ'</i>	inception
<i>idâfah</i>	annexation
<i>idmâr</i>	suppression
<i>ighrâ'</i>	instigation
<i>îjâz</i>	concision

<i>ikhbâr</i>	prediction
<i>ikhtiṣâṣ</i>	specification
<i>in al-nâfiyah</i>	negative <i>in</i>
<i>in al-nâṣibah</i>	<i>in</i> that governs the subjunctive
<i>in al-sharṭiyyah</i>	conditional <i>in</i>
<i>ishtighâl</i>	occupation
<i>ishtiḳâq</i>	derivation
<i>ism al-fi'l</i>	element with verbal force
<i>ism fâ'il</i>	active participle
<i>ism istifhâm</i>	interrogative pronoun
<i>ism kân-a</i>	noun of <i>kân-a</i>
<i>ism m'nâ</i>	abstract noun
<i>ism maf'ûl</i>	passive participle
<i>ism makân</i>	noun of place
<i>ism mawṣûl</i>	conjunctive noun
<i>isnâd</i>	attribution
<i>isnâdî</i>	attributive
<i>isti'ârah</i>	metaphor
<i>istifhâm</i>	interrogation
<i>istifhâm inkârî</i>	interrogative implying a negation
<i>istithnâ'</i>	exception
<i>ittisâ'</i>	expansion
<i>jam'</i>	plural
<i>jam' sâlim</i>	sound plural
<i>jâmid</i>	defective
<i>jazâ'î</i>	conditional
<i>jazm</i>	jussive
<i>jumlah</i>	sentence
<i>jumlah fi'liyyah</i>	verbal sentence
<i>jumlah ḥâliyyah</i>	circumstantial clause
<i>jumlah ismiyyah</i>	nominal sentence

<i>jumlah kubrâ</i>	major sentence
<i>jumlah muthbatah</i>	affirmative sentence
<i>jumlah sughrâ</i>	minor sentence
<i>jumlah zarfiyyah</i>	adverbial sentence
<i>kalâm</i>	speech
<i>kân-a al-tâmmah</i>	absolute <i>kân-a</i>
<i>khavar</i>	predicate
<i>khavar muqaddam</i>	predicate placed in front
<i>khilâf</i>	dissimilarity
<i>lafz</i>	utterance
<i>lafzah; kalimah</i>	word
<i>lahn</i>	solecism
<i>lâm al-nahy</i>	<i>la</i> of prohibition
<i>lâm al-amr</i>	requisitive <i>lâm</i>
<i>lâm al-ibtida'</i>	<i>lâm</i> of inception
<i>lâm al-ta'rîf</i>	definite article
<i>lâm al-tawkid</i>	emphatic <i>la</i>
<i>lâm jawâb al-qasam</i>	<i>lâm</i> of the correlative of the oath
<i>lawâhiq</i>	affixes
<i>mâ al-mawṣûlah</i>	definite conjunctive pronoun
<i>mâ al-sharṭiyyah</i>	conditional <i>mâ</i>
<i>mâ al-ta'ajjubiyyah</i>	<i>mâ</i> expressive of surprise
<i>mabnî</i>	invariable
<i>mâḍî</i>	past
<i>maf'ûl</i>	object
<i>maf'ûl bihi</i>	direct object
<i>maf'ûl ma'ah</i>	concomitant object
<i>maf'ûl mutlaq</i>	unrestricted object
<i>majâz murakkab</i>	compound metaphor
<i>majrûr</i>	genitive
<i>makhfûḍ</i>	noun in the genitive

<i>maṣḍar</i>	infinitive noun
<i>matbû'</i>	antecedent
<i>mathal</i>	proverb
<i>mawḍi'</i>	place
<i>mawṣûl</i>	relative pronoun
<i>mu'annath</i>	feminine
<i>mu'annath haqîqî</i>	real or natural feminine
<i>mubâlaghah</i>	hyperbole
<i>mubtada'</i>	subject of a nominal sentence
<i>mubtada' mu'akhar</i>	backed subject
<i>mudâf</i>	annexed
<i>mudâri'</i>	imperfect verb
<i>mudhakkar</i>	masculine
<i>mufîd</i>	informative
<i>mukhâtab</i>	addressee
<i>muṣâḥabah</i>	accompaniment
<i>musnad</i>	attribute
<i>musnad ilayh</i>	attribute correlative
<i>mustaqbal</i>	future
<i>muta'alliq bi</i>	attached to
<i>mutakallim</i>	first person
<i>mutarâdif</i>	synonym
<i>muthannâ</i>	dual
<i>nâ'ib al-fâ'il</i>	subject of the passive
<i>nâdir</i>	uncommon
<i>nafy</i>	negation
<i>nahw</i>	syntax
<i>nahwî</i>	grammarian
<i>nahy</i>	prohibition
<i>nakirah</i>	indeterminate
<i>naṣb</i>	accusative case

<i>naṣb al-mudâri'</i>	subjunctive mood
<i>nathr</i>	prose
<i>nazm</i>	construction
<i>nûn al-wiqâyah</i>	<i>nûn</i> of protection
<i>qâ'idah</i>	rule
<i>qarâ'in ḥâliyyah</i>	situational indicator
<i>qarâ'in lafziyyah</i>	verbal indicator
<i>qarînah</i>	context
<i>qasam</i>	oath
<i>qat' wa isti'nâf</i>	pause and resumption
<i>qiyâs</i>	analogy
<i>qiyâsî</i>	regular
<i>raf' al-mudâri'</i>	indicative mood
<i>ṣadr</i>	initial
<i>ṣâhib al-ḥâl</i>	co-referent of circumstance
<i>samâ'</i>	usage
<i>ṣarfah</i>	deprivation
<i>shâ'i'</i>	common
<i>shâdh</i>	irregular
<i>shibh jumlah</i>	quasi-proposition
<i>ṣifah</i>	adjective
<i>ṣîghah</i>	mood
<i>ṣilat al-mauṣûl</i>	relative clause
<i>ta'lîl</i>	causation
<i>ta'lîlî</i>	causative
<i>ta'lîq</i>	binding
<i>ta'wîl</i>	interpretation
<i>taḥdhîr</i>	cautioning
<i>tajarrud min al-'âmil</i>	absence of regency
<i>tanwîn</i>	nunation
<i>taqdîm wa ta'khîr</i>	word order